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ABSTRACT

These proceedings are comprised of 25 presentations divided into 5 "tracks." Section I, Diversity and Social Justice, has "Free to Learn with Body and Soul Jazz Divas, Beat Poets, and Street Preachers" (Ferrante, Belcastro); "Clashing Cultures in Our Classrooms" (Gabrich, Rothenberger); "Encouraging Adults in College to Engage with Inclusive Communities" (Lauderdale et al.); and "Cultural Identity and Classroom Architecture" (Reinhart, Thomas). Section II, Ethics and Leadership Track, has "Passion for the Impossible" (Alverson, Crossen); "Leading Learning by Assuring Distance Instructional Technology Is an Ethical Enterprise" (Balmert, Ezzell); and "Moral Leadership and the Role of the Adult Educator" (Ursery). Section III, Instructional Technology and Leadership, has "Pedagogy, Technology, and Learning Styles" (Beaumaster, Long); "Mentoring Program for New Associate Faculty Members of the School of Professional Studies at Eastern University" (Boyd); "Using Distance Education Technologies to Enhance In-Class Discussion Among Older Learners in an Institute for Learning in Retirement" (Clarke); "Letting Learners Lead" (Kent); "Using the Web to Sustain an Academic Community" (Mandell, Rounds); and "Hybrid Distance Learning Format" (Martyn, Bash). Section IV, Communities of Learners, has "Fostering a Community of Learners in a Corporate-College Setting" (Grapin et al.); "Covey's Habits and Synergetic Learning Community" (McGarrity et al.); "'Will You Be My Critical Friend?'" (Megarry); "What Makes a Cohort a Learning Community?" (Miller); and "Internship Partnerships for Enrichment" (Smith). Section V, Leadership and Organizational Change, has "Interdisciplinary Learning as Preparation for Leadership" (Ashbrook et al.); "Putting the Focus on Organizational Learning" (Boyce); "Figuring Out What Matters in Collaborative Programs" (Ezzell, Turner); "Orienting Adult Students for a Successful

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Transition into College" (Flaherty); "Importance of Creating a 'Sense of Community' Within an Adult Student Cohort" (Harris); "Inquiry into the Factors Influencing the Success of the Under Prepared Adult Student" (Luke); and "Spinal Adjustment" (Norris, Richter-Hauk). (YLB)

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CREATING NEW MEANINGS IN LEADING LEARNING

Proceedings

Twenty-Second National Conference on Alternative and External Degree Programs for Adults

Adult Higher Education ALLIANCE
American Council on Education

October 9-12, 2002

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

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SECTION I

Diversity and Social Justice Track

Free to Learn with Body and Soul Jazz Divas, Beat Poets, and Street Preachers

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> Take the hammer of Faunia to everything outlived, all the exalted justifications, and smash your way to freedom. Freedom from? From the stupid glory of being right. From the ridiculous quest for significance. From the never-ending campaign for legitimacy.
>
> From Philip Roth's *The Human Stain*

> If I had a message for my contemporaries, it was surely this: Be anything you like, be madmen, drunks, and bastards of every shape and form, but at all costs avoid one thing, success.
>
> From Thomas Merton's *Learning to Live*

I went off, my fists in my torn pockets;
My coat too was becoming ideal;
I walked under the sky, Muse! and I was your vassal;
Oh! oh! what brilliant loves I dreamed of!

My only pair of trousers had a big hole.
Tom Thumb in a daze, I sowed rhymes
As I went along. My inn was at the Big Dipper.
My stars in the sky made a soft rustling sound.

And I listened to them, seated on the side of the road,
in those good September evenings when I felt drops
Of dew on my brow, like a strong wine;

Where, rhyming in the midst of fantastic shadows,
Like lyres I plucked the elastics
Of my wounded shoes, one foot near my heart!

Arthur Rimbaud's *My Bohemian Life*

Approaching education in the tradition of Henri Bergson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Paolo Freire, and with a Dionysian spirit that howls [ever so serenely though] against the restrictive agendas of high education in America, this seminar focuses on learning as an experience of ineffable insights and questions that open students and faculty to memorable and transformative moments for lifelong learning. Participants will be provided an assortment of provocative film clips, readings from Beat poetry, riffs of great jazz divas and their swinging sidemen, penetrating fiction bits, and the apocalyptic visions of street preachers that are intended to evoke ideas that affirm, once again, in an age of timid expressiveness and political correctness, an age that has reduced liberal education to professional training for success in the market place, in an age such as this, an educational atmosphere that encourages and nurtures growth in intellectual empathy, critical awareness, personal identity, and human freedom thereby enabling students to discover their capacity for passionate dissent that fosters cultural diversity and social justice.

"Free to Learn with Body and Soul" fits into the overall theme of this conference that is considering ways in which leadership may be exercised in educational programs designed specifically for adult learners. It stresses that leadership models must include the collaboration of academic disciplines, university partnerships with various institutions, and open dialogue in the classroom between faculty and students. It then asks the question, "What else?" Within the more specific sub-theme of diversity and social justice, that question becomes, "What else is needed to encourage students to give voice to their individual perspectives and concerns that constitute the diverse society in which we presently live?"

The facilitators of this seminar believe that the flourishing artistic underculture of America in the 1950s provides a place to begin an inquiry into these questions. During this period, the "beat" voices of Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, Billie Holliday, and many others were heard in the streets and nightclubs of our major cities. Those voices resounded with passion and dissent. And, it is precisely that, passion and dissent, which the presenters believe is missing these days in the teaching/learning process and procedures of today's classrooms.

Passion is a natural, enthusiastic, personal, spontaneous, visceral involvement in what we know and teach. It means being, as novelist Philip Roth puts it, dramatic without being melodramatic, rambunctious without being stupid, not too well concealed or too well behaved, releasing the learner's intensities "from the institutional rectitude that can intimidate" the best, the brightest, and the less-so, of our students. Dissent is the disciplined, intellectual soul of passion; it means being independent in thought, often non-conformist in opinion, suspicious of provincial, sloganized group think, encouraging students to "yearn to be rational and of consequence and free." It means conceiving of critical thinking as "society's ultimate subversion." (2-3)

The Beat poets and writers, jazzmen, and singing divas of the 1950s, besides simply trying to make a living, were infused with passion and its consequent dissent from the prevailing worldview of their time. America's 1950s (a convenient abbreviation for the post-World War II years extending to the early 1960s) was, in general, a time of materialistic striving, conventionality of opinion and speech, deliberate and implied racism, misogyny, anti-Semitism, and virulent homophobia, among other ills that contaminate the human spirit. It was a time of enforced "under God" compliance in pledges of allegiance to a McCarthyite era that heralded intolerance as a national virtue. Consequently, a political correctness dominated civil discourse that required consent and compliance.

Like Winston in Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four or the Savage in Huxley's Brave New World, subterranean voices, such as the night club comedian Lenny Bruce and the Trappist monk Thomas Merton, rose up in revolt. Beat, jazz artists, and urban hermits, although generally loyal and patriotic citizens, were singing, swinging, and preaching to a different tune, a tune that could be a thematic antidote to the first decade of this millennium that gradually and menacingly portends a return to the insular correctness of fifty years ago. A revivified spirit of the passion and dissent of this subculture of merry tricksters can provide a model for teaching and learning, as in Marshal Berman's words, "a vocabulary of opposition," (313) that encourage the growth of intellectual passion and empathy, brave critical awareness wary of groupthink, independent personal identity, and sound expressions of honest opinions that are subversive of "correctness" and are "rational and of consequence and free."

The revival of passion and dissent within our classrooms takes a retrospective stance not only back to the under culture of the 1950s, but also back to the impassioned urgings of wise philosophical and educational theorists. For example, Ralph W. Emerson's vision of the self-reliant thinker and doer (31-66), Henri Bergson's *elan vital* as a life-affirming, creative impulse always waiting to be unleashed from repressive thought (*passim*), and Carl Rodgers's (105-108) and Paolo Freire's (*passim*) notion of education as a dynamic, interactive and reflective process that frees people from their sloganized thinking and fires up confidence in the value of their own experiences of life.

But the 1950's Beats, jazz artists, and monks were not philosophers of education, or theorists about passion and dissent, nor political revolutionaries. They were artists; they were not about theory or politics but about art, an art that is above philosophical or social dissensions. For this reason, they are adaptable to our attempts to free the intellectual and emotional capacities of our students, and perhaps ourselves. While there can be serious objections to the often drug besotted, self-centered, and semi-anarchic disinterestedness of these temperamental artists (such as Norman Podhoretz's testy but frequently valid warnings about romanticizing the 1950s underculture) (22-56), their impassioned artistry, often surrounding an implied or veiled dissent against a mass hyper-rational orthodoxy of thought and action, remain a vital, visceral, street-experienced expression of creative freedom.

Allen Ginsberg's howling against modernity's attempt to robotize people (8-20), Jack Kerouac's joyful love of the authenticity of ordinary people (55-58), Billie Holiday's insistent, sassy defiance of racist and misogynistic attitudes (CD), Miles Davis's introspective and superbly unique music (CD), and many other's creative works of the 1950's offer models of passion and dissent. Selections of their genius, used in the classroom, can help us to renew the jazz/beat impulse, a spirituality of the heart, as well as of the mind, an openness of expression, an appreciation of the beauty of being less concerned about careers, money, and success, and more concerned about what is at the heart of everything that is worth learning, i.e. life itself. And it is this focus that has been lost in today's classroom. And it is this focus that is the prerequisite for any authentic discovery of diversity or social justice. In other words, the goal of a passionately dissenting education is not to perfect ourselves (smash such nonsense with the hammer of Faunia!) or even to get in touch with ourselves BUT to get *beyond ourselves* in an effort to find something far, far greater than our isolated egos, something far deeper than our politically correct slogans can grasp or our wearying striving for capitalist success can gain. And, as Oscar Wilde reminds us, that something far greater, that something that is really worth learning, cannot be taught. None-the-less, there are ways in which we can help students to discover it. As Kerouac explained in *On the* Road:

Dean and I sat alone in the back seat and talked. "Now, man, that alto man last night had IT - he held it once he found it; I've never seen a guy who could hold so long." I wanted to know what IT meant. "Ah well" - Dean laughed - "now you're asking me impon-de-rables - ahem! Here's a guy and everybody's there, right? Up to him to put down what's on everybody's mind. He starts the first chorus, then lines up his ideas, people, yeah, yeah, but get it, and then he rises to his fate and has to blow equal to it. All of a sudden somewhere in the middle of the chorus he *gets it* - everybody looks up and knows; they listen; he picks it up and carries. Time stops. He's filling empty space with the substance of our lives, confessions of his bellybottom strain, remembrance of ideas, rehashes of old blowing. He has to blow across bridges and come back and do it with such infinite feeling soul-exploratory for the tune of the moment that everybody knows it's not the tune that counts but IT - " Dean could go no further; he was sweating tell about it. (206)

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Clashing Cultures in Our Classrooms: Learning Groups versus Individual Competition

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Teambuilding and being able to work in cooperative learning groups are highly valued skills required of most employees in today's workforce. These skills are also widely used as pedagogical strategies for teaching adult learners. Despite the benefits and importance of group work, many adult learners try to avoid it. They believe that competitive assignments in which students work against each other are more valid methods for assessing their learning. This paper will examine the educational benefits for using group work with adult learners, then present several guidelines for forming and monitoring groups, as well as evaluating and assessing their end-results.

Introduction

College faculty members have long known that students learn more and better by becoming actively involved in the learning process. Many of them embrace the Chinese proverb, "What I hear, I forget: what I see, I remember; what I do, I understand." Consequently, over the past twenty years, more faculty have attended workshops, read about, and designed cooperative learning activities for use in their classes with the ultimate goal of engaging students in learning.

"Cooperative learning is a generic term for various small group interactive instructional procedures. Students work together on academic tasks in small groups to help themselves and their teammates learn together" (Millis, 1996, p. 1). To be

cooperative, a group must have a clear sense of their positive interdependence by which they hold each other personally and individually accountable to do his/her fair share of the work. Group activities are designed to help individuals seek outcomes that are beneficial to themselves and to all group members. Consequently, active communication by all group members is essential to maximize everyone's learning outcomes (Johnson, 1992).

Panitz explained, "the underlying premise for cooperative learning is founded in constructivist epistemology. Knowledge is discovered by students and transformed into concepts students can relate to. It is then reconstructed and expanded through new learning experiences. Learning consists of active participation by the student versus passive acceptance of information presented by an expert lecturer" (2000).

Unfortunately many adult learners resist and resent small group activities and assignments. They enroll in college classes with the cultural belief that individual graded assignments are the only "valid" indicator of their academic performance. This belief clashes with strategies that many instructors attempt to use in their classes to enhance learning. This clash of cultural beliefs is the focus of this paper. This paper outlines educational benefits for using group assignments with adult learners, then describes strategies for forming and monitoring learning groups, as well as evaluating and assessing group assignments.

Types of Learning Groups

Cooperative group assignments used in many college classes fall into three main categories:

1. Informal cooperative learning groups: Brief, temporary groups designed during class time to assess students learning and understanding of the course material. There are many different structured activities that faculty use to actively engage students in group discussion about the content of the course. These activities usually are used to assess students' cognitive understanding of a lecture or reading, but are not part of a student's final grade in the course.
2. Cooperative based study groups: Students work in groups which are designed as study groups to provide all members with assistance in understanding the content of the class. Faculty members seldom evaluate these groups.
3. Formal cooperative learning groups: Students join a group over a period of time to accomplish a specific task or assignment. The end-result may be the presentation of a group project, report, experiment or case study. These assignments are usually evaluated by the faculty and students, and are calculated in each student's final grade for the class (Johnson, 1992).

Using formal cooperative learning groups tends to be the most problematic for many instructors because these assignments are graded and calculated into each student's final grade in a course. Consequently, many students feel that their individual assessment on this assignment is colored by the performance of their teammates, and is not a fair method for evaluating their grade in the class. Also, many faculty struggle when grading the end-results of these groups because they want their evaluation to be fair and realistic.

Benefits of Using Learning Groups

There is a long history of research on cooperative versus competitive and individualistic strategies to help students learn (Johnson, 1993; Panitz, 2000). Research findings indicate that cooperative, compared with competitive and individualistic efforts, typically result in:

Higher achievement and greater productivity.
More caring, supportive relationships among students.
More active participation by all group members in learning.
Healthier attitudes toward teamwork and shared learning.
More practice building problem-solving and critical thinking skills.
Better interpersonal and small group communication skills.
Better diversity understanding among students and faculty.
Reduction in many students' performance anxiety.

Many instructors use learning group assignments because they understand how these assignments help students learn cognitive information, develop teambuilding and interpersonal skills, and build support systems for many adults who rush to campus between jobs and families. Unfortunately, many adult learners resist and complain about learning groups because their lives are already busy and group assignments place an extra burden on their time. Also, adult learners often do not want to deal with conflict that arises in groups because they spend much of their work day dealing with difficult people and want their college experience to stimulate their thinking, but not their interpersonal communication skills. Finally, adults resist group assignments because they believe that it is not a "fair" assessment of their performance in a course. They believe that their final grade in the course should reflect their performance, and not their ability to work with other students. Despite these complaints, learning groups are excellent pedagogical strategies for helping adult learners to actively participate in their learning, to develop better interpersonal and problem-solving skills, and foster supportive climates among adult learners on college campuses.

Strategies for Successful Forming, Monitoring and Assessing Learning Groups

Many college faculty members use formal cooperative learning groups to facilitate cognitive understanding of the course material and to help students practice team building skills. Unfortunately, problems and pitfalls often arise as faculty attempt to evaluate the end-result of the group's work and the assessment of each individual's contribution to the end-result. The following issues must be considered when using learning groups in college classes.

- Forming cooperative learning groups: There is no one-best way to form learning groups, however we recommend that the faculty members assign students to groups and make diversity one of the primary criterion when organizing the groups. Also, when working with adult students, time constraints may be an important issue. Therefore, faculty may want to form groups based on the geographical areas where students work or live, so that they can meet more easily outside of class. Or, instructors can organize teams of students who have common blocks of unscheduled time.
- Size of the group: Groups of 4 to 7 students usually do well because everyone has a greater opportunity to participate and to share his/her information. Also, it is easier for group members to hold each individual accountable for his/her fair share of the work. Often smaller groups lack resources and larger groups experience more conflict.
- Time for groups to meet: There are several strategies for facilitating group meeting time. The first is to reserve a portion of the regular class time each week for group to work together. This strategy allows each faculty member to observe how groups are working together and if every member is doing their share of the work. In addition to meeting during class, groups may need to schedule several times to meet outside of the class. These meeting times should be recorded by all group members and reported to the instructor. Students can also form virtual groups who "meet" via e-mail, computer conferencing or telephone conferencing.

- Group rules: Often group conflicts stem from different expectations group members have for one another. To get groups off to a good start, instructors should give groups times during class to prepare and sign a list of ground rules that they all agree to observe (for example, dates to meet outside of regular class time, come to meetings prepared, let another member of the group know if you must miss the meeting or be late, listen to everyone's suggestions and opinions before making a final decision, etc.) In addition to preparing and signing the rules, a copy should be given to the instructor.
- Firing or quitting: On the first day that the cooperative groups are formed, instructors should distribute a handout that clearly describes the group assignment and policies for firing group members or for members who decide to quit a group. If a team member is chronically non-cooperative and the rest of the team has done all they could to get this member to participate, they may send the errant group member a memo warning him/her that he/she must participate in the group within the week. If the person fails to do so, the group notifies the student and the instructor that he/she has been fired from the group. Similarly, if one group member is doing most of the work, he/she may send a memo to the other group members explaining the situation and intention to resign. If the group does not start cooperating, he/she may notify the group and the instructor that she is resigning from the group (Felder and Brent, 1996).
- Faculty monitoring learning groups: Faculty members must remember that they are still in charge of the class even when students are working in their groups. Therefore, they should take an active role in monitoring the groups by:
    - Designing and distributing clear, specific instructions regarding the assignment.
    - Explaining to the class the value, relevance and benefits of group work.
    - Scheduling some class time for groups to meet and for faculty to observe groups working together.
    - Helping groups set realistic goals and rules.
    - Giving mini-lectures on interpersonal and problem-solving skills.
    - Listening in on group discussions and offering advice.
    - Providing immediate feedback to groups.
    - Involving students in rubrics for assessing a group's performance.
    - Collecting peer ratings several times over the lifetime of the group, and making adjustments if necessary.

Assessing the group and individual performance: There are many methods for evaluating the end-result of the group work and each individual's performance in the learning group. Instructors may want to design their own rating scale, rubric, or open-ended reflection sheet. On the one hand, instructors may want to involve the entire class in the process of designing an evaluation method to assess the group. Whichever method is used, instructors should present the assessment method to the entire class when the groups begin working on their projects. By describing these standards early, each student has a better understanding on the criteria by which they will be evaluated.

In addition to assessing the end-result or project completed by the group, instructors also may want to evaluate each group member's performance. Using a rubric or rating scale designed by the students or instructor, students can rate themselves and their teammates at the end of the project or several times while the group is working on their project.

Conclusion

Using learning groups in college classrooms with adult learners can be challenging and instructive. Despite complaints that groups take too much time and present "problems," faculty members should design group assignments to enable students to become more active in their learning process and to develop effective social and problem-solving skills that are critical in today's workforce and society.

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Encouraging Adults in College to Engage with Inclusive Communities: A Panel

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Diversity is a common course of study in the university. Perhaps of all subjects one would imagine such a study involves service learning. Indeed, such study without some confrontation of questions active in the community risks irrelevance despite the difficulty of rigorous action research or even productive field study. Nevertheless, it appears most adult education treatments of efforts to combat racism, homophobia, sexism, and unfairness focus their attention on psychological change in the classroom. This paper will review adult education efforts to promote inclusiveness and examine efforts in one Southern city to practice experimental adult education in the community and classroom. [Abstract submitted by E. Lauderdale]

Solidarity with diverse neighborhoods helps (Elliott Lauderdale)

> We talked about what *race* matters have meant to the American past and of how much race *matters* in the American present. And I vowed to be more vigilant and virtuous in my efforts to meet the formidable challenges posed by Plato and Du Bois. For me, it is an urgent question of power and morality; for others, it is an everyday matter of life and death. (West, xvi)

How do adult educators address issues of diversity in an effective fair and progressive way? Our situation differs from an industrial situation where one has a mix of employees who do not choose to be educated, but are being trained either to avoid incidents or to mitigate a lawsuit or someone's idea of a joke involving demeaning others. Perhaps driven by something like "political correctness crap," individuals thought nooses humorous and not harassing at at least three large state universities and at the Southern Company.

Often we would prefer to forget our hurtful history. We do not want to look at a film of tourists photographic postcards of lynchings which forced the organization of the NAACP, nor read of the systematic repression of the civil rights movement. (http://www.journale.com/withoutsanctuary/main.html; McWhorter) Bombing four girls in church is too close to home. McLaren reviews a shameful past. Some would claim such shame is past; that affirmative action is preferential treatment and an unnecessarily radical redistribution. To the contrary, both Cornell West and Peter McLaren point out multiple efforts to push back civil rights and equal opportunity.[1] A backlash against limited progress has put me in the position of reading a paper five times looking for redeeming value in a paper on abused and endangered males. Was I blind to the evidence presented?

This paper intends to address the deeper difficulties in teaching a cultural diversity seminar (CDS) for adults. The self-selecting process leaves most Ann Coutler's from the classroom. What pressures are there to limit ones discussion to conform to liberal lies? One design is to take some measure of perceptions and to compare these views to evidence that might substantiate historically changing views and biases.

Our panel has self-identified as aging civil rights advocates (ACRA). Therefore the reading we review accepts the need for diversity work. My personal suggestion is that such work may need to occur in the community as well as in the classroom. Measures of public attitudes are plentiful and variable. John Fernandez has repeated the same questions for numerous years and therefore his findings give us some measure of the accuracy of conventional wisdom concerning progress. Some questions have moved in meaning or connotation since first asked. Some are still open to our colleagues in adult higher education. Some point to a need to reconsider the nature of our progress. Whites continue to believe Blacks use their color as an alibi (44%), while Blacks have moved from a high of 30% agreement to a current 11%. Whites have increased their support for interracial relationships (56-65%), while Blacks have moved in the opposite direction (83-77%). The races and sexes differ radically in their belief about minorities having difficulty in finding a sponsor. Thirty percent of Whites and eighty percent of both Blacks and women agreed with this statement. Whites appear to remain consistently unaware of Black's views, while Black's percentages declined from a high in 1985 of 90% feeling it was hard to get help. 70% of women or double the number of men feel they have to work better to get ahead. (1999, pp.44-6; 57-7; 61) Several divisive questions remain: Is acceptance of difference greater? Does the US accept equal opportunity, and enjoy the contributions of diverse cultures? Does affirmative action stigmatize suspect classes with preferred treatment?

Needn't we challenge the radical differences in the views of our constituencies? Where do our fellow citizens stand. Is there a way to understand their private feelings in an ethical way? Is it ethical to disturb their composure? Further, is there a justifiable need to reach beyond received views to seek out those without an initial interest in civil rights for some community deliberation in hopes of finding some mutual areas of interest that are obscured in normal discourse?

These questions were raised by memorable experiences in cultural diversity seminar and in community meetings. Recently a student from what I thought was one of my most successful CDS classes confided in me that she did not learn what she had hoped from the class. She wanted to acquire an intimate knowledge of what a woman's experience was like in some other culture like Japan. The class lives on our differences

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[1] Looking at the first 15 of 18900 web pages on "race baiting," I found five charges against white Republicans for fanning hatred against blacks, seven charges against liberal often media people for inciting black anger against whites. Shell Oil's PR program to raise US black anger against critics of its operations in South Africa for their racism. One must certainly tread carefully in this Orwellian world.

I advertise topics like reverse discrimination to encourage more conservative students to join our seminar. As one would expect, the class often draws more African-Americans, women, human resources professionals, and more radical males. Having the civil rights choir in seminar is a source of frustration for this ACRA. In the same successful class I managed to resolve a misunderstanding caused when one white male wore a "What would Buddha do?" shirt to his research presentation, playing with the common WWJD reference to Christian choices. The other white male took offense noting the persistent harassment he feels as a Yoga in the bible belt. One can never be sure of ones social context. In a Mobile United, a civil rights and leadership civic organization, meeting on the separation of church and state, I witnessed a rowdy violation of etiquette when the visiting law professor explained how Congress had recently added "Under God" to the pledge.

One becomes attuned to such situations where people cough out half audible insults like the "atheist" that a community leader felt obliged to share with those around him. He persisted in his name-calling despite clear statements of the speaker's contribution to his Christian church and even after I reminded him of his active religious work. In my worst CDS experience, adult students would turn to the side to say something beyond my hearing. A discussion of what was obvious without hearing would have contributed to course goals. Instead, I had to rely upon the lesbian in the class and her one ally to criticize the leader of the majority on the basis of his body language and circumlocutions. Such a struggle appeared unimaginable to some students who were limited by their assumed superiority and stereotypes. The hateful have learned to become circumspect.

It appears the personal is political. My desire to confront them both in class may be beyond the bounds of propriety – it certainly violates strictures against discussing religion and politics, not to mention sexual preferences and orientation. Teetering on a violation of etiquette, conventional wisdom, and the language of hegemony seems crucial to meaningful personal and political learning. The often mentioned increasing subtlety of racism pushes us to more carefully honed approaches to prevent hard fought gains from being reversed by what may be liberal lip service, "knowing glances" and power politics of right wing hegemonic resistance to fairness and the full contribution of all members of our global community. (West, pp. 94-5). Cornel West predicted in Race Matters the vengeance with which discrimination, regressive taxation, and the denial of basic health and child care needs would return. (1993, pp. 95-7).

Because of our constituencies, adult education has an opportunity to join adults, with broad experience in a range of our neighborhoods, in deliberation to guide their actions toward our collective interests. I may have an advantage working in Mobile because of our large population of African-Americans and their experiences as co-workers and friends across racial borders. In seminar we have an opportunity to learn from the direct experiences of some students in the civil rights struggle.

One opportunity for work is by clearly presenting and sharing this history that is so surprisingly obscure to people whose parents protected them in their own neighborhoods, schools and churches. As whites we are privileged not to risk degradation on a family trip which results from insults from a stranger in a diner between NY and Hamilton. We are blind to the daily insults of consistently having purses moved from us and having cabs drive by. (West, xv) McIntosh lists several examples of a white heterosexuals blindness to unearned privilege: I can be casual about whether of not to listen to a lone black woman. "I can talk with my mouth full and not have people put this down to my color." I can express my worry about racism or our country without being seen as a self-interested. My home living arrangement is an asset and I can feel free to talk about them and my social events of the weekend without fearing most people's reactions. (79-86). Heterosexuals do not need to consider moving to one of the few place in the country where they can carelessly go out in public with their partners. This may be an example of the community space Baptiste, Welch, Cunningham, and McLaren (p. 6) seek.

How can we best present for frank discussion the everyday and historic civil rights struggle? Given ideas hidden by coughs and stony silence, we must devise some way of escaping conventional discourse to recognize real conflicts of ideas and actions. One Black student noted, "My family taught me not to discuss racial issues. They don't want to hear it. You may be branded a radical and have barriers put in your way."

One notes finely tuned niceties which would close the experimental struggle to verboten thoughts. I have learned to emphasize how important it is to welcome any thoughts. Student can learn to accept that racism and racist ideas are embedded in our everyday language and culture. Being open to frankness can foster learning. We might leave open the possibility that now is the moment when Thurgood Marshall would decide affirmative action is ready to be eliminated and to celebrate the hand and hand play of all children in Alabama. We might proceed to work together to carefully consider the research and thought necessary for relaxing law and skepticism. How can we honestly, effectively, and meaningfully study our interrelationships and complicity in oppression, while working to build solidarity with the oppressed?

Some lessons can be learned cognitively, other lessons appear to be fraught with a constant peril of avoidance and elision. (Welch, p. 77). Welch reviews Foucault's genealogy of oppression as involving theoretical reduction, historicist reduction, utopian dissolution, and the universalizing dissolution we find operating when the particulars of sexist oppression are answered by sliding into essentials. (pp. 67-73) Dr. Welch uses Daly, Cone and Foucault to demand we stop avoiding the social responsibility of addressing concrete suffering by vague general claims like, "But isn't the real problem *human liberation*?" (p. 49). Instead of the historicist identification of evil as a disease, which we assume can be extricated surgically, we might to look for the benefits gained by some from cruelty. (Foucault in Welch, p. 69) Welch frankly declares herself a Christian with a double role as oppressor and oppressed. Welsh clearly faces and resolves tentatively a fluid role of oppressor suffering from nihilistic relativism and resisting oppression (pp. 13-14)

Welch wrote her book closer to the unquestioning height of post-modernism. She presses her political understanding into service. Most writers I review here share her need to achieve some delicate balance in order to act in concert with the oppressed. (Cunningham praises Fingar) Peter McLaren in "Unthinking Whiteness, Rethinking Democracy" notes youth across the nation in Georgia as well as in Maine who are finding meaning

> ...only in their relation to their capacity to hate non-whites. While some postmodernist adventitiously assert that identities can be fluidly recomposed, ... I maintain that this is a short-sighted and dangerous argument. It would take more than an army of Jacques Lacans to help us rearrange and suture the fusillade of interpretations and subject positions at play in our daily lives. (McLaren, 14)

The writers are unified in their choice against what McLaren calls the whiteness associated with a devastating denial, disassembly, and destruction of other races. (p. 6) McIntosh describes how privilege promotes denial so well that she repeatedly forgot her examples of White and heterosexual privileges.[2] McIntosh and Welch both describe the "foolish, infantile, ignorant, thoughtless, destructive" "asphyxiating atmosphere of male bonding." (McIntosh, p. 83; Welch quotes Mary Daly, p. 68). While the effect on other of unearned advantage ranges from inadvertent, harmless, to the intentional and hurtful, our blindness leaves us unaware of the reality of our assumed meritocracy. The reader might recall the differences in perceptions noted in Fernandez and note below in the section of our paper by Coffman. It is interesting that preferred treatment is now so harmful for the disadvantaged under affirmative action. McIntosh notes how privilege hinders male development with layers of denial. (p. 77) When one hears, "I never see you as black," does that mean as McIntosh suggests that privilege has dehumanized one into to thinking one helps others by making them more like us? (pp. 78, 83) McIntosh says privilege is a misnomer for permission to overpoer, control and be thoughtless toward another. (p. 83). Unearned power also closes one from the knowledge of survivors. Much oppression is spoken of only indirectly in humor, would one truly like a subservient spouse or co-worker?

It may be time for some self-parody of progressives as a test of our organic intellectual character. According to Gramsci, an organic intellectual would share languages between the center and the periphery. I have compiled in the bibliography those progressive writers from whom I have learned most. If one were to condense their story it might read.

Capitalist hegemony renders "greasers" surplus labor to be exploited in the interest of a post-Colonialism that endeavors to dominate the Third World. (McLaren) Afro-centrism builds the solidarity of the masses necessary to "strip white supremacy of its authority" (West, xiv) and unearned advantage to which privilege he is unconscious (McIntosh, 84). We are not autonomous and disinterested. Unless we silence and disempower those, not necessarily culpable but complicit, networking enemies, subjugated knowledge will not be available for struggle. (Baptiste, 14; Foucault in Welsh)

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[2] McIntosh, pp 80-1. In an earlier draft was apparently fearful of denying my whiteness and forgot to develop the ideas of damage to the privileged and the transition to my parody inadvertently mocked the importance of what McInstosh called denying unearned advantage.

Perhaps such a manifesto would be a hint for students of what I wanted and therefore bias my use of the classroom as a progressive experiment. While hyperbole, can we avoid a careful considerations of these claims?

The history, which as noted above we quickly forget, is reviewed in Peter McLaren's paper. It includes racist statements from the heroes of the U.S. story, hateful riots, and criminally unfair laws like Proposition 187 or the 1885 California antiloitering law against "Greasers, or the issue of Spanish and Indian book. (p. 18). Both McLaren and Cornel West make clear the continuance of this racist story to the present.

The pain of associating ourselves with that hurtful past may be acceptable if we undertake an on-going battle with current institutional and more subtle racism.

All writers considered at length emphasize the importance of community. As she does in the tension of poetry of Wallace Stephens, Sharon Welch finds a dynamic, open, transcultural solidarity in the poetics of revolution. Dr. Cunningham stressed the need to building a commons for international and marginalized groups and experiential learning within social movements and social action. She refers to Taiwan Community University as an example. (2001, p. 8; cf. West, p. 97-99) Ian Baptiste reminds us that popular educationer, unions, activists, environmentalists, and women can teach us to recognize vice. (1998, pp. 16-17).

My classes and I have worked in a variety of community education efforts including: "Unfinished Business: overcoming racism, poverty, & inequity," a program to promote "Teams for Inter-Ethnic Solutions," <http://www.tulane.edu/~so-inst/mainpage.html>, and with a variety of local community organizations like Mobile United, Volunteer Mobile, the Southern Poverty Law Center < http://www.splcenter.org> and Mobile Area Education Foundation. These efforts create some space within which our diverse community can collaborate. (McLaren, p. 6). Welch (1985, p. 89) battles her internal contradictions by engaging in a solidarity group. A comment by a student attending an regional conference celebrating anniversary of the Southern Conference for Human Rights, at which Eleanor Roosevelt half-refused Bull Conner's order to segregate, gives us some hope kind of multicultural solidarity being advocated. (McWhorter, p. 49-55)[3] "What are all these white folks doing at a conference on the unfinished business of overcoming racism, poverty & inequality?" (Egerton, J.,1998; Jessie Ball duPont Fund, 1999). On this last point about how to struggle from the university into the communities, all agree more needs to be learned.

This process is described cogently in what Cornel West suggests was for WEB DuBois described as the "glorious life of the mind…a highly disciplined way of life and an intensely demanding way of struggle that facilitated transit between his study and the streets; whereas ...("The crisis of black leadership" in Race Matters, p._ 62). Sadly I must save for tomorrow my pursuit of what Ian shares with his older brother writer of the street, the clear demarcation of our coming struggle as co-learners after justice. It is a powerful moment when I think with Sharon Welch and Wallace Stephens about what Fred Shuttlesworth and Ian Baptiste would say to Ghandi on International Workers Day.

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[3] Though McWhorter following Foucault asks what would have happened had the first lady gone to jail instead of sitting over the rope in the middle of the auditorium dividing blacks from white.

"Truth ever is, untruth never was. Love alone binds and truth and love accrue only to the truly humble." While Ghandi sent this note to DuBois for inclusion in Crisis on May Day 1929 <<http://www.mkgandhi.org/letters/unstates/amer_negro.htm>>, it may be that humanistic resistance theories of adult educators are inadequate to neutralize the niceness of our enemies in the classroom and factory floor. I am paraphrasing the court deposition of an executive from the Southern Company, "I cannot imagine how anyone would think of a noose as a form of harassment." Ian Baptiste suggests a pedagogy of ethically disempowering our enemies may start with popular education, if we can escape the sterility of technicist, scientism of human capitalism. (pp. 13-7) I can think of no one in this group of alien world citizens who would run from the bombs, ropes or evil carnival of lynching to sanctuary.

Classroom dynamics are important (Pauline Coffman)

I want to emphasize the difficulty white students have in recognizing their part in a system of oppression and to encourage us to think "system" instead of reacting with defensiveness and so much guilt that we cannot hear what others are saying.

I was led to this point by three things: 1) the discussion of the paper presented last year (AHEA.2001: The Trouble with Systemic Racism, from Isaac Owolabi, Deborah Wright, and myself); 2) the reading of several recent presentations by other adult educators; and 3) by an experience in a class recently. First, a comment on the discussion of last year's paper. I was surprised by the intensity of response in the room, as Isaac, myself, Deborah, and Denise AlMahdi-Jeigula who joined the panel, presented the thesis of our paper and opened the floor for discussion. Several whites expressed frustration at still feeling blamed after years of working on racism and diversity. "Nothing has changed in spite of all my efforts!"--seemed to be their feeling, one that was deeply held, and one I personally recognize. People of color in attendance, on the other hand, generally seemed delighted to know that the topic was being raised up. Whites continue to think that individual efforts are going to make a significant difference in the lives of people of color and are hurt and disappointed and even resentful when they do not get adequate credit for their efforts.

Second, I was struck by a comment in Tisdell (1997), who describes a classroom reports that white students analyzed class discussion and exercises in a personal and humanistic way:

> …those who benefited by more social systems of privilege resorted to almost a humanistic psychological analysis of difference and 'otherness' as individual as opposed to partly socially constructed through social structural systems of oppression and privilege. (p. 6)

while students of color analyzed the same things by referring to systemic realities.

> Students who experienced more systems of oppression tended to focus more on social structures in their analysis. (p. 6)

If this is a description of a wider reality, I can't help but wonder whether we simply need to say to white students who are reacting defensively, "You are not being blamed for this; it is larger than any one of us. However, if we do not band together to try to change this oppressive reality, then we are—individually and collectively—guilty and should be ashamed of ourselves."

I suspect, however, that this is typical of the way whites react to discussions of racism. Sharon D. Welch, in *Communities of resistance and solidarity: A Feminist theology of liberation,* (1985) helped me see the power of the overriding "way things are" or hegemony and the difficulty we have in penetrating it to change the system. She indicts the Christian church for allowing sin to be defined individually (something cultural models say about the western world, too) rather than systemic in a world where the first world dominates the third world and cannot hear what the oppressed are saying.

In fact, she goes on, the realization of what the powerful has done to others is so hard to hear that we stop caring (p. 89).

> My participation in a solidarity group was fairly straightforward and unproblematic until I saw a film about the revolution in El Salvador. Watching pictures of the police and the military drag people into the streets, beating and terrorizing them, hearing descriptions of tortured and mutilated bodies, feeling a fraction of the horror of that situation, shattered all my worlds of meaning. My ideals of universal solidarity faded in face of a suffering too great to name. My sanity was my insensitivity; my humanity was my inability not to care. (p. 89)

Substitute for El Salvador how we watched refugees streaming out of Bosnia a few short years ago, or heard of massacres in Rwanda and did nothing, or listen today to the pain of Palestinians and Israelis caught in the maelstrom of tensions over land and the struggle to live in peace, or continue to read of acts of injustice and inhumanity in our own country every day. How can we hear when the pain is so great? How can we accept responsibility for the actions of the first world from which we benefit so greatly?

Welch asks, "Can these two, the imperatives of sanity and of humanity, be reconciled? I do not know. I have not been able to reconcile them" (p. 89). The awareness of the loss is so great that even if justice is reached and a victory is won, something irretrievable has been lost in our world. Yet, she goes on, it is in the unspeakable and unbearable anguish a realization that there is hope in life-giving compassion and solidarity.

Recently I filled in for an instructor who had become ill, by leading the final three sessions of the course on Group Dynamics. The class was quite diverse: two white men, one white woman, three Hispanic American women, one Hispanic American man, and two African-American women. On the final night I decided to review the basics of what I consider important to learn about group dynamics and so I introduced the terms "perception" and "attribution."

"Perception" is defined by Robbins in the text, *Essentials of Organizational Behavior*,6th edition, [2000,Prentice-Hall] as "a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment." (p. 23) "Attribution" theory develops explanations of how we judge people differently depending on what meaning we attribute to a given behavior (p. 24).

These terms are important because they get at what every one of us does when we try to organize how we see reality. We develop shortcuts; impressions; ways of thinking that help us see something quickly, decide about it, and move on. The ways we organize reality also become central to our sense of well-being; if our perceptions are challenged we are irritated, we must stop and defend, or refute, or think about it.

The problem is that our perceptions and attributions are not always based on fact or reality. They are "taken in" because our parents see things that way or our church does or friends who are important to us do. We all want to be included in what is going on; it takes courage to stand against the pervasive way of thinking and we risk being pushed out of our families, our circle of friends, our jobs, our churches when we resist the dominant perception. And so we cling to our perceptions.

With this type of introduction, I usually have a typical perception about something in mind to use as an example, but that night in class I did not. So I simply asked the class to select something in the news that represented a conflictual situation, and we would use it. One student hesitantly offered, "The Middle East?"

So I put "ISRAELIS" on one section of the chalkboard and "PALESTINIANS" on the other. I asked them to name typical perceptions they had or they recognized that are present in the U.S.A. about Israelis. The responses were revealing:

- Modern
- Democratic
- In touch with the world
- Clean
- Authoritative
- Religious
- Persecuted
- People we know

Under "Palestinian" the responses were:

- Backward
- Fanatical
- Terrorists/Violent
- Dirty
- Irrational
- To be feared

This was amazing to me; they volunteered every response--I did not lead them at all. We went on to see what behaviors the class "attributed" to Israelis and Palestinians on the basis of these perceptions. Here's what they said:

Israelis

- Trustworthy
- Powerful
- Friendly

Palestinians

- Evil acts
- Bomb innocent people
- Commit suicide

By this time, the class was laughing quietly and their embarrassed looks told me they understood the point of the exercise. I asked them if anyone knew an Israeli personally. One student said she had two or three close Jewish friends that she liked a lot. (I did not press to find out of they were Israeli Jews or American Jews.) No one knew any Palestinians personally.

I told them how uncomfortable I was with this list on the board, and related my story of studying in Beirut during my junior year of college, and meeting my Palestinian roommate Tania, etc. etc. I emphasized that she married Hanna, she is Russian Orthodox Christian, and he is Anglican Christian (I didn't mention that Hanna has given up on the church and blames it for a lot of the problems they face today)…That they are both highly educated people, he is president of Birzeit University, and both want peaceful lives – as all of us do.

We went on to discuss the hierarchy of class, race, and gender. They could immediately tell me that white males are at the top, with white females close behind. Under that they placed Asian women, then Asian men; then Hispanic women; then African American women; then Hispanic men and last African American men. I related the point of many researchers in women's studies who find that the subordinate groups know a lot about the dominant group, but the dominant group knows very little about the subordinate groups.

We talked about "power" and how it can be abused; I described "shared-power," where the group is able to work together to find solutions to problems. I used as an example the time MESA (Middle East Students Association) set up an Israeli checkpoint at the elevators of our main classroom building, complete with Israeli guards with mock rifles. The Palestinian student who played the role of the Israeli said he had a surge of adrenalin when he realized students were afraid of him and would do what he ordered them to do; he interpreted this as a dangerous temptation for those in power.

We talked about how prejudice happens; how scape-goating happens (blaming someone or a group for our problems, forcing them out or killing them so that the problem will go away) and why.

It seems to me that we must acknowledge the presence of conflict, of tension, of a strong desire to stop the discourse of pain and suffering and resolve the tension with a quick fix, of a refusal to accept blame for something I, individually, did not do.

In general, we are not brought up to deal with conflict well. I use the Thomas-Kilmann *Conflict Mode Instrument*,(1974) which asks takers to decide which way they are likely to act in short descriptions of conflict situations. The results tell the taker whether a typical response to conflict is: avoiding; competing; compromising; accommodating; Or collaborating.

- "Avoiding" is when no one's needs are getting met, neither mine nor yours;
- "Competing" in when my needs are more important than yours and if I push hard enough, I will win.
- "Accommodating" is when I give up—you can have it your way; but I am miserable.
- "Compromising" is when both sides get part of their needs met, but not completely (often enough to be able to move on).
- "Collaborating" is the process that is best at satisfying both sides of a conflict because they take the trouble to find out what each other wants and brainstorm

> and decide on the best way to get there. It takes longer, usually, but results in ownership by both sides and a satisfactory outcome.

Learning one's own style and reflecting on the benefits of listening to one another helps the group receive different points of view in a discussion, and cuts down on the danger of scape-goating (blaming one's troubles on an individual or a group), or "groupthink" (when everyone immediately agrees with the one in power).

Tisdell concludes her paper with five recommendations to follow in our classes as we struggle to deal with racism:

> 1. The inclusion of practice-based and experiential activities (both in-class and outside assignments) that require an analysis of concepts in relationship to both one's own identity as a person of a particular race, gender, sexual orientation, as well as analysis of social and educational institutions. Some of these practices include writing one's own cultural story, role plays, interviews with educators and observations of learning activities about multicultural issues, analysis of gender and race issues in movies or the media, etc.
> 2. Guidelines for class discussion, especially clear discussion of both the role of instructors and of students in facilitating class discussion.
> 3. An honest acknowledgement of tension in the classroom by the instructors.
> 4. Closing activities for each class session that take into account affective, emotional, and spiritual dimensions that leave participants with hope even though we will always be unfinished in dealing with these issues.
> 5. Requiring collaborative small groups of students to create and facilitate an experiential activity. (p. 7)

I find her list very helpful; I would add that we need to help our students learn how to deal with conflict in a positive way. When we are irritated we should be encouraged to respond: why am I irritated? What can I learn from this? What did I expect to happen that did not happen and why did I expect it? Conflict should become a signal that real learning and change is about to occur, not a signal to run and hide.

Finally, we can also help our students to understand the systemic web of racism in which we all exist and to set aside our guilt until we can fully hear what those affected by our privilege have to say. Hopefully, we can help our students to have a full and open dialogue that leads to expressions of regret and exploration of community response that lead to life-giving hope for a better world.

ISSUES OF THEOLOGY IN RACISM, (Isaac Owolabi)

Sharon D. Welch in her book *Communities of Resistance and Solidarity, A Feminist Theology of Liberation* (1985) concurred with Marx (1964) and feminist theologians' "point to complicity of the Christian tradition in the oppression of women." Further, they question the adequacy of the Christian faith theology. Marx (1964) maintained that the Christian faith legitimized the oppression of women. Further, Welch (1985) asked about "... reality of a redeeming, liberating god in light of the barbarities of the twentieth century: the holocaust, Vietnam, Hiroshima-Nagasaki; sexism, racism, the nuclear arms race, and the torture of political prisoners" (p 5).

It appears to me that Welch (1985) essentially opined that the Christian faith and theology exacerbate women oppression, sexism, racism, and all the evil that has ever occurred against the human race.

Truthfully, mistakes have been made in the past by Christians. For instance, southern Christians sided with slave owners declaring that the owners could do whatever they wanted to do to the slaves because they were the property of the owners. In fact, the courts assented to the declaration that slaves were not human. It is fair to say that a number of Christian churches sided with Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement in their struggles in latter years.

While Welch (1985) criticized the Christian faith for oppressing women, no specific evidence was cited from the Scriptures to support this claim. Let me begin in Genesis 2: 23 and 24: "And Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall be one flesh."

Christ's teachings upgraded what constitutes sin against women in Matthew 5:27 and 28. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her in his heart." Moreover, John Chapter 4, recorded the account of Jesus speaking to a Samaritan women by the well. Jesus violated the culture of the day in three ways, 1. It was not right for a Jews person to sit or talk with a Samaritan, 2. It was not culturally relevant for a man to be by a women alone without other woman or a man, 3. Jews people should not be in the territory of Samaritan. However, Jesus violated all these cultural norms in order to teach the followers that the gospel He brought transcends sex, race, and creed. Contrary to Welch (1985), the Christian faith has a full respect for women as well as people of all races.

Back to the issue of where God was when there were all kinds of evil in the world. My short answer is that God has always been in the same position He was when He created man and put him in the garden with a woman. Yet human beings chose to disobey God and took matters into their own hands. One thing God's law has in common with our law here in the US is individual rights and freedom to make choices. Everyone has a "free will" to choose what he/she wants; however, there are consequences for human actions. It is wrong to blame God for the actions of men and women in this world.

Now that we acknowledge that racism, sexism, etc. are not directly caused by God, let's try to see what we can do to fix our problem.

One editorial comment put it this way: "To be African American and male in school and society places one at risk for a variety of negative consequences. Although a number of African American males have made it into the mainstream of society and contributed significantly to the national labor force, the residual effect of 200 years of enslavement and another 100 years of legal discrimination cannot be denied" (p 505). We all know that education has been and will continue to be a solid rock to fight recycled and unfounded racist theories of genetic inferiority. Since the famous Supreme Court of 1954 declared school segregation in the South unconstitutional, the region has been the nation's most integrated region since about 1970. Segregation by race is strongly related to segregation by poverty. The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) maintains that multi-cultural education is an approach that values cultural pluralism and rejects the view that schools should seek to melt away cultural differences or merely tolerate cultural pluralism. Educational institutions should therefore strive to preserve and enhance cultural pluralism by endorsing the principle that there is "no one model American" (p 264). Given these definitions, however, and despite presumably good intentions, many educators tend to employ ill-conceived approaches for implementing multicultural education. While our discussions about this matter is the right way to seek a solution, I disagree with fellow educators operating from a missionary posture viewing their efforts as somehow rescuing or saving culturally deprived or economically disadvantaged students of color. I invite those folk to try to understand where people of color are coming from and learn how to better work with them.

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Cultural Identity and Classroom Architecture:

Comparative Experiences, On-Line vs. Traditional
United States and South Africa

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Session attendees will be exposed to a comparative discussion regarding the cross-cultural challenges of discussion forums or seminar spaces in distance learning courses offered on-line to adult learners from a South African and an American undergraduate institution. The presenters will address issues relating to the synchronous and asynchronous teaching/learning environments. Both approaches present new pedagogical and technical problems that push the boundaries of age, race, and gender.

The face-to-face traditional classroom presents its own unique challenges for support of student centered learning. Traditional faculty and students also confront issues of age, race and gender. The online teaching/learning environment requires new responses from both faculty and students while incorporating new technologies into student centered learning. While issues of cultural identity remain for online faculty and students, the on-line environment mediates the impact of characteristic identifiers.

Beginning with the assumption that an important goal of modern educators is broad, sustained student course participation, student-centered learning, it is perhaps ironic that of the three forms of classroom discussion presented here: traditional (face to face), synchronous (distant, real-time), and asynchronous (distant, non-time specific) the more technologically mediated pose the fewest bias-related obstacles to student participation. Traditional synchronous (face to face) discussions present faculty and students with the broadest array of cultural group identifiers. Often these identifiers, age, gender, ethnicity and others, pose significant impediments to individual student's class participation. Non-traditional synchronous (distant) and asynchronous "classroom" environments present fewer cultural identifiers but they are not absent. Name alone affects the context of conversations. Written expression also provides numerous identifiers of ethnic and gender backgrounds yet the presenters believe the non-traditional, synchronous and asynchronous environment is most culturally neutral.

The presenters will utilize examples drawn from their respective institution's web-based courses to discuss pedagogical techniques and web architecture found to be most effective in creating both sustained interactive discussions and reasonably bias-free learning environments in distant on-line courses.

THE E-LEARNING REVOLUTION IN SOUTH AFRICA HAS JUST BEGUN: ADULT EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

The Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at the University of the Free State, in collaboration with the School for New Learning at DePaul University in Chicago (one of the top ten adult learning institutions in the USA), developed and offers a specially designed management leadership degree programme for working adult learners, based on experiential learning and the assessment and recognition of prior learning. This degree is the first of its kind in South Africa. In both format and content it offers previously unavailable options to experienced workers who did not have prior opportunities to obtain a formal university qualification and who have gained informal management experience.

The Bachelor in Management Leadership (BML) is organised around the knowledge and skills that characterise a well-educated managerial leader in contemporary South African society. Both in content and style of learning it has been designed to give the adult learner maximum benefit.

The process of earning this Bachelor's degree is characterised by the assessment of what individuals know and can do rather than solely by the acquisition of credits through course work. Adult learners are given credit for competencies related to management leadership knowledge and skills, irrespective of how these were gained. Drawing on the values and skills of the liberal learning tradition, adult learners are taught problem solving, organisational and decision-making abilities for use in contemporary management settings. The teaching staff are selected from both professional and academic ranks to ensure the necessary expertise, but also the ability to teach in a learner-centred manner and trans-disciplinary environment.

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Assessment methods include: field exercises and technical reports, independent projects and dissertations, group work, simulated research applications, examinations, and web page presentations.

The approach to management education is characterised by an emphasis on the need for students to become critical and creative thinkers and eventually leaders who utilise innovative approaches in start-up ventures or within established organisations.

The degree programme is designed to engage learners in active learning styles (discussions, projects, essays) rather than passive learning styles (lecture, memorisation, testing). Therefore the faculty allows flexibility regarding the acceptable means for satisfying the formal degree requirements. Apart from the required portfolio courses, learners may gain credit for modules through previous coursework, earning credits for life and work experience, and prior independent study.

THE LEARNING PROCESS

Adult learners with working experience enter the programme with various levels of educational backgrounds and life experience. The Faculty recognises and awards credit for appropriate learning that adults may bring to the programme. The emphasis is on demonstrating learning through acquired competencies.

The first step in the learning process is to meet with the programme administrator for an admissions interview. This interview indicates the best next step for the adult learner and his/her readiness to enter the programme. If admitted, the learner enrolls for the *portfolio development workshop*. At the same time the learner meets with the academic advisor to plan the learning programme. Learners have the option of exiting at certificate level, diploma level or degree level.

The degree consists of three sections, a Leadership section, an Environment section and a Management section. It is certified by the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at the University of the Orange Free State and registered with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA).

The curriculum is revisited each time that it has been presented – for several reasons. It ensures quality control. One of the main aims of the BML is that it should be a management degree that is relevant to industry, and by revisiting course material, it ensures that the relevancy is questioned and achieved at all times.

THE PRESENT SITUATION

In January 1999, a group of approximately 45 students enrolled for the first-ever Portfolio Development Course (PDC) class. This was offered in the traditional classroom-teaching environment. Of this group, it is expected that 25 students will graduate in September 2002. There are also seven different on-campus semester groups enrolled, totalling approximately 150 registered BML on-campus students.

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During 1999, the University of the Free State entered into a partnership with e-Degree learning systems, a venture where this programme is offered as part of the e-learning drive. Although the decision has been made that the entire Portfolio Development Course (PDC), as well as selections of the Leadership (LEM), will be offered in a face-to-face manner, the rest of the courses are offered entirely online. There are currently three different semester groups following the virtual classroom route. In total therefore, there are 40 online BML students.

After negotiations with different parties, the partnership has been awarded a contract with the South African Department of Labour where some 4 500 student will acquire the BML degree, following the e-learning route. Already 300 students have completed the face-to-face session of the PDC. These students are currently completing this phase and are set to start their certificate during September. The next intake of the Department's students will be at the beginning of November 2002. The Department of Labour is the first government department to embark on a venture of this magnitude to educate and empower its entire workforce.

Companies have also started showing interest in the BML online programme. Currently, a group of 20 learners from MAKRO, a nation-wide wholesale chain store, have completed the PDC course and are preparing to start with the next level early in 2003. More negotiations are underway.

E-LEARNING

No doubt virtual collaboration between learners is one of the most important elements of successful implementation of online education. Transforming education from a mechanical process into an exciting, interactive learning experience is one of the primary reasons for considering web-based training delivery.

The BML online degree consists of various different elements of learning. Firstly, there is the compulsory, face-to-face session where the portfolio courses are offered. This week-long session covers the four PDC courses, namely Portfolio Development Capacity building, Introduction to the management-leadership model, and Numeracy. The learners then have to complete the assignments for the PDC. Whilst this takes place, learners meet at regular intervals online. The software used is **Topclass**, which makes provision for synchronous as well as a-synchronous discussion. The main areas of interaction are the chat rooms and the discussion boards, but provision is also made for announcements, course work, web-linked messaging and class lists. This allows the student contact with lecturers as well as fellow students at any Internet access point.

Once the PDC is completed, students will start with the certificate level. The online environment is especially conducive to this type of programme. Students, who have gained credits for subjects being offered, have the opportunity to accelerate their progress through the programme by joining one of the other online groups. Students normally do 3 credits per week. Students in each of the subjects have the option of making use of facilitation. The standard choice is a weekly online class of an hour, with a-synchronous discussions taking place on the discussion board. These topics are placed on the board weekly or biweekly and students are expected to make regular contributions. In many cases, marks are awarded for contribution to these discussions.

The online classes have proved to be invaluable. These give the opportunity for the instructor to facilitate, while active learning takes place.

"The pace of the courses is exhilarating and intense – no time for boredom," says an online student. To which another adds: "The past few months of studies was an eye-opener and a common-sense generator. My speed-reading skills have vastly improved so has my time management and my planning. I made four great new buddies with whom I have shared many "virtual beers"!

"eDegree adopts a best-of-two worlds approach, instead of a totally online or totally classroom-based delivery method. The benefits of both methods need to be captured to match the needs of the course content and the learners", according to Nigel Tattersall, CEO of e-Degree learning systems. "Learning in your own time and then attending important contact sessions or workshops ensures that employees have the opportunity to obtain detailed explanations and clarity on key concepts." A fitting example is the BML.

eDegree's shareholders include Johnnic Ltd and Price Waterhouse Coopers. Johnnic, the majority eDegree shareholder, with its subsidiary, Johnnic e-Ventures, adds significant value to eDegree through its Internet infrastructure, facilities, and expertise. | Price Waterhouse_Coopers, being a leading provider of e-business services, contributes considerable skills and experience in global best practice for e-learning solutions.

It is realised that the process of programme development is never complete. Lecturers, learners and the programme management are continuously accessing and reflecting on the learning outcomes, the process involved and pointing out shortcomings that need to be addressed. In the context of South African Higher education, the programme presents unique opportunities for the recognition of prior learning and enabling adult learners to reconcile the demands of work schedules with learning programs.

UNIVERSITY WITHOUT WALLS
SKIDMORE COLLEGE

Supported by a generous grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the University Without Walls program at Skidmore College has been embarked on an ambitious effort to extend and deepen its on-line liberal arts course offerings. This effort has been led by the pedagogical notion that learning at a distance requires an environment characterized by a genuine "class" experience and significant opportunities for students to engage each other as well as the faculty facilitator. UWW's course model is built around the asynchronous bulletin board. Drawing on personal experiences in several on-line courses, interviews with several UWW faculty members and a review of extant bulletin boards provides suggestive (if anecdotal) evidence that the asynchronous classroom environment may provide greater opportunities for bias-free discussions than traditional face-to-face classrooms. Upon reflection this may not seem a very surprising conclusion, but early critics of distant learning feared that the technologically mediated classroom would be sterile and fail to satisfy the natural human desire for social identification and interaction.

Drawing on Reinhart's own course experience, an on-line and on-site history of the Harlem community, Reinhart was pleased to observe that two women students of color in this class felt sufficiently comfortable early in the term to raise questions and make comments regarding issues of sensitive personal identification. As an African American history instructor in traditional classrooms for many years, Reinhart was pleasantly pleased, if a bit surprised, that these matters of personal identification were raised so early in the course. Several examples may be helpful:

From Michelle's original class introduction: 4 February 2000

"Hi everyone. Living just outside of NYC,I am looking forward to connecting the past and the present, making it tangable. It's been in the past two years that the Harlem Renaissance has caught my attention, and I have fallen for it. Finally taking a class in it to learn more is exciting to me.

I am very happy to know that i am not the only one who is a little nervous about creating a web site! Just another learning experience i guess. "

Michelle's later comment: March 4, 2000

"After reading the Down These Mean Streets by Piri Thomas, i had wanted to add something to the seminar about the issue of light vs dark. Reading the scene where Piri and Brew debate over light skin vs dark skin in chapter 13 and later chapter 18 when they meet up with Gerald Andrew West, brought up much thinking within myself. I am glad i waited though, especially devouring the Delany Sisters and a few writings in the Harlem Renaissance Reader.

The issue of dark vs light, has played in my mother's family history. Tracing her genelogy, there was a spilt, where as one group choose to move to nashville and create a new life of passing, while another choose to stay in the mountains of North Carolina and be who they were -- "black folks". After reading all the material to this point, i guess i would say it was a matter of survival as to why they choose to pass.

These thoughts rummage through my head after reading for the project on Zora Neale Hurston. In her short play Color Struck (Lewis, The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader p703), although fiction, the main player fell into the whole idea that lighter was better, and possible seen as even more beautiful. The issue is seen again in a short story by Langston Hughes called Who's Passing for Who? (Clarence Major ed. Calling the Wind, HarperCollins, 1993, p151), which i read last year but all this made me remember it. The Hughes story is where this couple starts treating a couple they are drinking with better, perferental, when they find out that they weren't black. It gets to the point where the reader doesn't know who is passing, who's white, who's black and who isn't. Though both pieces are fiction, they illustrate the attitude of the time.

The Delany Sisters is the illustration come alive. As Beesie says: "There was an attitude amoung some Negroes that to be lighter skinned was more desirable. There as a saying: 'The backer the berry, the sweeter the juice. but too much black and it ain't no use.' If you were dark skinned you were looked down upon, even by other Negro people!....It's probably just a cultural thing that Negroes picked up from white people in America. We saw it in our own family that people treated the lighter-skinned children better. But it was not something that was even disscused in our household" (p86)

Sorry for the long quote, but I can't say it better then she did. I find it interesting how these ideas of image is still with us today (look at Spike Lee's School Daze, he illustrates it with the battling of two sororities). This topic fascinates me, because it is racism within a group against one's own. Reading this material(and having read Cane by Jean Toomer, who struggled with the idea of being mixed) has been very enlightening.

michelle

P.S. I must say that while reading the Delany Sisters, I was completely reminded of "my mama's people", especially their words. They were two awesome women."

Another similar example:

Monica's original introduction, Feb 1, 2000

Hello All!! My name is Monica. I am looking forward to getting to know each of you a little better and hearing and working with you in class. I am taking this class for two reasons; I have had a fascination with Harlem, particularly the Harlem Renaissance, for many years. This course will help to round out my perspective. I am also taking this course as part of the degree requirements for the MALS program here at Skidmore. I can't wait to get started and look forward to our ongoing discussions.

Monica's later comment: February 16, 2000

"Hey all!!

Chapter 3 of Lewis's book "When Harlem was in Vogue" introduces us to some of the "stars" of the era. I was struck by the interesting way in which each of these men in their own way mixed literature, politics and race. Claude McKay is portrayed as the angry, arrogant black man, Jean Toomer is portrayed as the dismissed literary, and Langston Hughes is portrayed as the slumming black aristocrat. Each of these men however took very seriously their role as artist and particularly as black artist, as a means of informing the social context.

I recall an essay by Langston Hughes. This essay was in response to Countee Cullens comment that he just wanted to be an artist not a black artist (paraphrased, of course). Hughes' response was simply that the two are inextricably tied. The one informs the other. This is an idea that comes straight out of W.E.B. DuBois' "Souls of Black Folks". I'd like to hear the viewpoints of others on this."[4]

Following up on these initial impressions, the authors have asked the students who recorded the comments cited above to reflect a bit more comparatively about their experiences in the Harlem discussion "space" vs. the traditional classroom. Monica sent Corky her retrospective comments:

"Given that race was such a central topic in the course, it seemed unavoidable in the discussion. i think the bulletin board forces a certain straightforward-ness that you might try to work around in other fora. (you write differently than you speak) in an effort to be eloquent, and more importantly concise, you go straight to the topic of discussion and hope that the rest of the participants understand (or can read between the lines) your position. i think there was also the assumption that since we were all registered for a class on the harlem
renaissance, we would eventually get to the topic of race...so lets just deal with it right up front. anonymity certainly makes these candid conversations easier to do but one must still negotiate that fine line between saying enough to get your point across and not saying (writing) too much to seem like you're trying too hard. does that make any sense?

since i participated in both the on-line discussion and the in-class discussion, i think i can comment on both. generally, i think that student's on-line comments were very similar to their in-class comments, for some students (particularly those less comfortable speaking in
public) being anonymous made commenting on the material easier to do, but for the most part, students who spoke up in class also tended to do so in the chat-space. it wasn't an either /or situation. the discussion leaders in the in-class session also tended to take the lead
in the chat-space. at least, that's my foggy recollection. i hope this is helpful!!"[5]

Monica's remarks suggest that the differences between the two pedagogical "spaces" were not terribly different. She does, however, seem to indicate that the bulletin board environment provided some small measure of protection for students who are looking for opportunities to address forthrightly issues of color or other social questions where personal identification might otherwise be an inhibitor. It is interesting to note that in both of the examples above, each student decided not to identify themselves as persons of color but in Michelle's case particularly, strongly identified her own personal and family life with issues raised by class readings and discussions.

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[4] Harlem: Past and Present, Spring 2000, Asynchronous Bulletin Board.

[5] E-mail, Monica M. to Corky Reinhart, September 16, 2002.

CONCLUSIONS

The authors believe this comparative pedagogical discussion worth pursuing, not just as regards the relative differences these specific classroom architectures play in encouraging or inhibiting discussions of race or other culturally sensitive issues, but also to help reveal the other possible pedagogical consequences created or allowed by newer technologies, in new "classrooms."

SECTION II

Ethics and Leadership Track

A Passion for the Impossible: How Theology Provides Insights on Education in General

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I: Defining the Classroom

Perusal of the sessions offered at the 2002 Alliance Conference reinforces the current trend to better understand and define both the classroom and the adult learner. Educators are encouraged to create more innovative, accessible, packageable, and technological classrooms. A perpetual buzz exists among college personnel about the typical current adult student profile and how best to recruit, retain, and service that population. Even more emphasis appears to be placed on the adult student of the near future. What will her/his educational needs be? What obstacles will she/he face in meeting those needs? What can our college do to be ready when that "profile" emerges?

As important as these considerations are for higher education in general (and for theology as well since it is part of that endeavor), the discipline of theology proposes additional and perhaps different questions concerning the classroom and the adult learner. All disciplines bring unique perspectives and pedagogical possibilities to the reality of adult education and theology is no exception in that regard. The purpose of this paper is to articulate what is characteristic, and sometimes unique, to the discipline of theology in its contributions to the educational process. It is our hope that the reader will discover that theology, contrary to many perceptions about the discipline, is an eminently practical discipline replete with user-friendly concepts.

In theology the subject of our discipline is impossible/Unknown. The direct subject, of course, is God, but the very nature of God means that God is so unlike us human beings, that it seems impossible to know God, or all that there is to know about God. God is *the-Impossible-to-know*.[1] And yet, it seems as though the human mind is driven to know what it does not know, and even, what it cannot possibly know or understand. In Jewish and Christian theology it is through human experience and the world that we come to know God, or the Impossible-to-know. Several characteristics of theology provide for those in education insights into how we might pursue this human passion for the Impossible-to-Know.

Characteristics of Theology

The Dynamics of Human Experience

Theology takes a very serious approach to the phenomenon of human experience. Indeed, theology is rooted in human experience. Even when one is reflecting on God, that reflection can never be separated from the fact that it is the human person who experiences and languages God. Thus, even theological reflection on God is concomitantly reflection on the human person. But furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, it is *how* theology reflects on the experience of the human person. Most disciplines reflect on human experience as *object*. That is, they reflect on human experience by objectively studying the experiences that human beings have. For example, if we would consider the topic of education, we might study the effects of particular pedagogical styles on learning. Professional educators would tend to look at desired learning outcomes and objectively measure the effectiveness of particular pedagogical styles as they impact on specific populations. This method has proved immeasurably valuable when considering the diverse populations that are taught.

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[1] For this insight we are indebited to the philosopher John Caputo aas quoted by Theresa Saunders in "American Catholic Universities and the Passion for the Impossible," *Horizons*, Fall (2000) 239-255.

The discipline of theology, however, reflects on the human person *as the one who is experiencing*. In other words, theology takes very seriously the *subject* who is aware of him/ herself as the one who is doing the learning.[2] "To learn" is a verb, a predicate, that requires a subject. As subject, *"I"* am the one who is doing the learning. *"I"* learn. *"I"* am a learner.

However else we may perceive the classroom and the adult student, theology insists that one definition of adulthood (and therefore of the adult student) is that he/she must really, truly, and actively become a learner. Education is not simply something that the teacher or the institution provides for him/her. He/she must become the subject who learns.

Furthermore, the discipline of theology does not simply raise questions, but raises questions about the questions.[3] For example, today in both traditional and adult learning there is a great emphasis on "experiential learning." We grant college credit for significant experience, or we suggest that "hands-on" learning is more effective. But what do we mean when we use the term "experience?" Do we all understand it the same way? What exactly happens when we say we experience something? Denis Edwards, borrowing from philosophical insights, suggests that there are two dynamics involved in human experience—encounter and interpretation.[4] Very often, though, encounter alone is taken to be the whole of experience. But we have thousands of encounters daily. We encounter every other commuter on their way to work, but we do not have experiences of all of them. We hear thousands of sounds daily—the flow of air through the ducts, sirens in the distance, muzak in the stores or while we are on hold—but we don't experience all of them. The other dyanamic, interpretation, is necessary for an encounter to become an experience. We remember particular commuters we encounter for particular reasons, we recall some of the myriad of sounds we hear for particular reasons. Each of us possesses a unique interpretive scheme by which certain encounters become particular experiences for us while those same encounters are not experiences for others.

The branch of philosophy and theology which analyzes these particular interpretive schemes is called *hermeneutics*, or the study of interpretation. Hermeneutics gives us the tools and insights in order to appreciate the complexities of human experience. When we speak of the role that experience plays in the lives of adult learners, we also need to speak of the importance of developing a "hermeneutics of experience."[5] It is crucial that students who use experience as a source of learning come to an awareness of their own interpretive schemes. For example, teaching in a women's college affords us the opportunity to help our students appreciate that they experience life as women. That sounds as if it should be obvious. Of course, our women students know they are women. But few of them have reflected on what being a woman brings to their hermeneutics of experience. Upon doing so they find that gender is very instructive for understanding how and what they experience.

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[2] Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, Tr. William V. Dych, New York: Seabury Press (1978) 28-31.

[3] Ibid., 48.

[4] Denis Edwards, *Human Experience of God*, New York: Paulist Press, (1981) 6-9.

[5] Bernard Cooke , Sacraments and Scramentality, Mystic, Conn: Twenty-third Publications (1997) 33-36.

[6] Karl Rahner, "Sprit in the World, Pr. William V. Dych, NY: Continuum, (1994), Chapter I.

The contemporary awareness of diversity in the classroom can also be served by attention to a hermeneutics of experience. Race, religion (or lack of it), ethnic background, our particular families and neighborhoods, our socio-economic status, our attitudes towards learning, our experiences of good or evil, our self-concept—all of these and more contribute to our complex interpretive schemes. Appreciating this rich complexity not only sheds light for a deeper understanding of our past, but enables us to more consciously, freely, and fully experience our present and future.

The last paragraph leads us to one final insight about a hermeneutics of experience. If human experience requires both encounter and interpretation, and if interpretation is what we bring to the encounter, then somehow we are somewhat responsible for our experiences. Encounters largely happen to us. They are the objective pole in experience. For the most part we do not have control over who or what we will encounter on a given day. But our interpretive scheme (the subjective pole in experience) is what we bring to the party, so to speak. Whether or not we are conscious of our interpretive schemes it is still that dynamic which is the difference between a mere encounter and an experience.

Helping our students to articulate their hermeneutics of experience will enable them to reflect more deeply on exactly what they have experienced and what those experiences can teach them. More importantly, they will learn more about themselves as the subject who experiences. Once they become more conscious of their interpretive schemes they will actually be able to choose and enhance their experiences, whether they be of work, learning, or relationships.

Flashes of Insight, not Answers

The human being, according to Karl Rahner, is in her/his deepest self a questioner, one who experiences her/himself as the subject who questions. Here, Rahner does not mean the everyday questions we pose to solve petty, or even serious, problems. Rather, he means that we are questioners in an existential sense—our very existence is a question. For example, we are inclined toward the inexplicable joy of loving other human beings; yet our love of others is often the source of our deepest pain. Almost every meaningful experience we can have as human beings is fraught with ambiguity.

If the human being is a questioner in her/his deepest self, then God, theologically, is the existential answer. Theologically, God is not the answer in the sense that God answers all of our everyday questions. Rather, God is the answer in the sense that He/She is the very source of our question, the very reason for our question, and is the ultimate horizon against which all of our questions are thematized and make sense. Theologically, without God, we could not find life meaningful enough that existential questions would be worth asking. Theologically, God is not about answers, per se. He/She is the answer in the sense that he/she makes our questions possible and meaningful.

If God and religion are not about answers, then what should we strive for? Theology's response is that it strives for insight rather than answers. One of the purposes of religion is to "shed light on the ambiguity of human existence."[7] The Psalmist tells us that the law of God is "like a lamp unto our feet." That is, we go through life trying to negotiate its ambiguity, seeing only a few feet in front of us at a time, as if we were carrying a flashlight in the darkness.

Theologically, then, education is not so much about getting the right answers. All knowledge is always "knowledge in process" anyway,[8] so even our right answers will change with time and circumstances. Even knowledge that reveals the constants of the cosmos requires continual reinterpretation and application to changing realities. But more importantly, right answers are ultimately impractical when dealing with the ambiguities of human existence. While it is important that medical science can define and pronounce death precisely, that knowledge does little to help one spouse negotiate a future that no longer includes the other spouse.

Perhaps the most profound Catholic concept for a discussion of education is that of the *sacramentality of the cosmos*. Unfortunately, it is a greatly under-appreciated concept, even, and perhaps especially, among Catholics. The word *sacrament* is often limited to the church's seven sacraments—Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Reconciliation, Matrimony, Holy Orders, and Annointing of the Sick. To be sure these are crucial to a proper understanding of Catholicism.

But the term *sacramentality of the cosmos* transcends the seven liturgical rituals and literally embraces the entire cosmos. One might say that it is the font of the imagination. How do we mean this? The term *sacrament* comes from the Latin *sacer*. It means *holy*. In Catholic and Jewish theology only God is holy. Humans are not in themselves holy but only to the extent that they participate in the holiness of God. A sacrament, in the more general theological sense is something that is set aside to mediate the holiness of God. Chalices, Bibles, vestments, rituals, even persons, are considered holy insofar as they are consecrated, dedicated to mediate God's holiness, God's word, God's action.

But God's holiness, word, or action cannot be limited to these officially consecrated objects, no matter how profound they may be. We do not worship chalices and books. What we worship is a divine person, who is Incomprehensible Mystery, whose holiness, word, or action cannot be limited. But either way, the revelation of this mysterious God must be mediated in some way—through ideas, music, human language and action, and through the mysteries of the cosmos. This means many things. But for our purposes, it means that the entire cosmos mediates the holiness of God; all of created reality is in a sense a sacrament of God. That means that anything in the cosmos is worthy of study. Ultimately, Catholics study because what they learn does not simply give us greater knowledge of the cosmos but also of God.

In order to arrive at insight theology uses a reflective process. This reflective process is one of inquiry and awareness. It is aware of the sacramentality of the cosmos and it inquires, that is, it raises questions in order to understand, to appreciate or to become *more* aware. As such it raises questions. Its questions are not the kind that look for direct or immediate answers. Rather, they are questions that facilitate a pondering about the mystery of life and death, about how one continues to trust, believe, and love, especially in the face of death and loss. This reflective process leads to insights about how one lives with life's ambiguities.

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[7] James Hanigan, *As I Have Loved You*, New York: Paulist Press (1986) 78.

[8] Mary Gerhard and Allen Russell, *The Metaphoric Process*, Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press (1984) 188.

The Primacy of Mystery

Theology's tradition of the use of a reflective method is rooted in the primacy of mystery. Theology recognizes the mystery dimension of life. Another term for the-Impossible-to-Know, or God, that is more beneficial in applying theology to education in general is the word *mystery.* This was a term favored by the twentieth century theologian Karl Rahner. Rahner examined the concept of mystery and observed three different levels in which we understand mystery.[9] As these three levels are explained it is important not to see them as mutually exclusive. Rather, they flow in and out of one another. Indeed the first two levels, as we will see, serve as pre-conditions for what Thomas Aquinas calls natural knowledge and speculative knowledge. Thomas' examples are geometry as the natural knowledge that leads to the speculative knowledge of architecture. Arithmetic is the natural knowledge that leads to the speculative knowledge of music.[10] One cannot jump to music without the count, beat or rhythm. Rahner goes behind knowledge to mystery, a pre-condition of knowledge that questions, wonders, and stands in awe.

Put in secular terms, the first level of mystery is the awareness of something we don't know, a question or hypothesis we want to prove. The philosopher Gabriel Marcel would call this sort of mystery *a problem* - something to be solved.[11] Eventually, even if it takes hundreds of years this kind of mystery could be solved: the square root of *pi*, a cure for the common cold, how to feed the hungry people of the world. The second level of mystery is the mystery of life, experience, love. Again, drawing from Marcel, what distinguishes a problem from a mystery at this level is that a mystery is something, or someone we encounter, it is something to be lived, not solved.[12] By way of example, our students are mysteries before us. We encounter them in the pursuit of knowledge. Until, of course, one of them challenges a grade or doesn't do an assignment - then we've got a problem: how do we solve it? In the first level of mystery, as one pursues a solution, one gains a certain kind of practical, useful knowledge that is vital and exciting. And, hopefully, one is encouraged to continue to pursue more and more of such knowledge. In the second level of mystery one also gains knowledge; the knowledge that comes from relationships, good or bad, from experiences, good or bad. This knowledge too is practical and useful. However it can energize or paralyze us depending on many factors. As an example in reference to the classroom and how level one and level two operate and are related, a friend tells her experience with art and math.

> Art was always a problem for me. To this day I can't color in the lines. In fifth grade the teacher hung every student's art work from a certain lesson. It was the first time mine was ever displayed and I was humiliated because it was so poor, but at least my name was on the back of it. On a parents' visitation day to class the teacher explained the project then took the group to mine and said: 'Here is a student who obviously does not care

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[9] Karl Rahner, "The Concept of Mystery in Catholic Theology," *Theological Investigations, IV* , Baltimore: Helicon Press (1966) 38 ff.

[10] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* vol. 1, q. 1, art 2, New York: Benziger Brothers Inc 1947.

[11] Gabriel Marcel, *Being and Having,* Tr. Kathleen Farrer, Boston: Beacon Press, (1951) 154-175.

[12] Ibid..

> about her work.' Is it any wonder I still don't stay in the lines! On the other hand, in an algebra class I sat beside a student who simply didn't get it. I loved it, thought it was a game. One particular day I was helping this student during class while the teacher was giving instruction. The teacher had to stop a few times to reprimand the class for talking to each other. When she noticed me and this student however, she motioned for us to continue our work together. There we were and there was the teacher, solving problems (level 1) and building relationships of trust and respect (level 2). That teacher taught me more than algebra that semester.

Rahner's third level of mystery draws us more deeply into theological language. This mystery is *holy mystery*, the Incomprehensible, in theology, God. Rahner recognizes first that the human being is the creature who is constituted by *spirit*, or self-transcendence. The human person is *spirit in the world,*[13] the one who is conscious of herself or himself, who is conscious of the world, and the *otherness* of the world. In other words, the world is not me, I am not the world. Because the human person through *spirit* experiences the world as different, he or she is drawn out (in Latin *e ducere*) to understand or to come to know or to inquire about the world (level 1). In this being drawn out she or he comes to know herself or himself in relation to others in the world and the world itself (level 2). But also, in this process of self-transcendence, in the movement of being drawn out (*e ducere*) one comes to recognize a deeper mystery, a mystery so deep, so incomprehensible, so impossible-to-know that one is left in awe of the radical beauty, power and wonder that exists beyond us, yet touches deep within us. Let us return to Thomas Aquinas' example of music. Seeing the sheet music one can figure out the math, one may even be able to play the notes and play them well. But what of the artist who takes that music to a level of such depth that defies words? Or the art work that moves the ground of your being? Or the moment you see your child in such a new light that you are completely overwhelmed with your love for him or her? There are also moments in suffering, for example, when the person who is sick, or the people who are oppressed, experience such hope and joy, that, without that experience no such hope or joy could be known.

Knowledge of the Incomprehensible Mystery is not something we come upon by accident, nor is it the possession of clerics or privileged individuals.[14] Rather, it is the ground, the foundation, of all knowledge. For Rahner, the most important reason to pursue any level of mystery is to come to the awareness or *knowledge* of Incomprehensible Mystery. Nothing exists but in the womb of this Wondrous Mystery. Indeed, based on Rahner's starting point of the human person as "spirit" or self-transcendence this is actually the first or primal level of mystery, not the last. But it is so "apparently featureless"[15] that we miss it. Yet it is this *holy* mystery, the Incomprehensible, that fills us with awe. Furthermore, as impossible as it may seem to know this Incomprehensible Mystery, Catholic and Jewish theology, at any rate, believe that two dynamics operate in its revelation. First, the natural world, the world of human experience and human history reveals something of this mystery. Second, the Incomprehensible Mystery Itself yearns to be known, for the Mystery is also "spirit" transcending and communicating Itself.

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[13] Gerald A. McCool (edit) *A Rahner Reader*, New York: Seabury Press (1975) 14-15.

[14] Rahner, "Concept of Mystery," 53-54.

[15] Karl Rahner, "Experiencing the Spirit, *The Practice of Faith*, New York: Crossroad (1983) 81.

It is this mystery dimension of God, of human beings, indeed of the entire cosmos that is the principle for all human inquiry. It is mystery which attracts us, which fascinates us and draws us to ask questions about all of reality. Indeed, it is not so much that we grasp mystery as much as we are grasped by it! Because we are created by God, who is Absolute Mystery, we human beings are oriented, almost propelled, toward mystery. This was the principle upon which the medieval university system was founded. To the extent that colleges and universities today are linked to that system the primacy of mystery is still a fundamental reason for their existence. But it is explicitly the reason why Catholic Christianity is in the education business at all. It is true that the Catholic college/university offers much of the same that secular schools offer. But its explicit reason for existence is to reflect and inculcate this dimension of mystery without which, it believes, rational inquiry and discourse are ultimately meaningless.

The Cosmos is Ultimately Intelligible

The claim that rational inquiry and discourse are ultimately meaningless apart from this mystery dimension of God and humanity moves us to reflect upon another characteristic of the discipline of theology. For the Christian theologian the cosmos is ultimately intelligible. That is, life ultimately makes sense. This of course does not mean that we don't experience times, even decades or eras, when confusion seems to reign. But even our ability to recognize dis-order and confusion reflects our awareness of an underlying order. We are able to recognize dis-order precisely because we almost instinctively know that things are not as they should be, even when "as they should be" is not clearly defined or agreed upon by all. In other words, rational inquiry and discourse are meaningful because, in our deepest selves, we accept that the cosmos makes sense ultimately. We really do trust that if we think hard enough and well enough, and reflect deeply enough, we will discover insights that will help us to negotiate our existence in a meaningful way. If the cosmos does not make sense ultimately, then trust is simply a disguise for naivete or wishful thinking, either of which will eventually collapse under the weight of reality. The ancient people of the Near East understood this emphatically. The very word *cosmos* is Sumerian in origin. It quite literally means *order*. The ancients believed that when the deity created the cosmos it was not primarily a manufacturing (from the Latin *manus=hand* as in an external product made by hand) of some object (the world) as much as it was "breathing into" (*inspirare),* an infusion of divine life and order. And so Genesis of the Hebrew scriptures (borrowing from the Sumerian and Babylonian creation myths) begins with the phrase, "In the beginning when God created the heavens and earth, the earth was a formless wasteland [chaos], and darkness [confusion] covered the abyss [emptiness], while a mighty wind [spirit, breath] swept over the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'" [knowledge, wisdom, revelation, insight] (Genesis 1:1-3, *New American Bible*, bracketed words added).

It is worth pausing here briefly in order to draw our characteristics and themes together. It is unfortunate that contemporary perceptions of the word *mystery* often connote an inability to deal with the practical world. But from a theological perspective, experiencing life in terms of mystery does not mean that we are excused from attempting to solve the world's problems, that we can simply throw up our hands and say something like, "Oh, it's such a mystery and we will never figure it out." On the contrary, openness to the mystery dimension of life immerses us more deeply in the practical realm of the world and of human relationships. It is precisely our openness to the mystery of the common, interconnected humanity that we all share, of the mystery of a delicately balanced, again interconnected, planet and cosmos upon and through which we are all interdependently intertwined that make it so important to solve real problems in a real world. Since, theologically speaking, all human beings are oriented toward mystery, our rational inquiries and discourses are ultimately purposeful. Indeed, the primacy of mystery ensures that true and meaningful rational discourse is never simply about glorifying our own egos. Rather, authentic rational inquiry and discourse always possess a teleological quality. That is, it is always forward thinking, is always ultimately purposeful, always leads to a desired action. In short, it strives to bring order out of disorder.

From Inquiry and Instruction to Imagination

Following on this brief summary so far, and before moving to the other themes of theology, we can make some connection between theology and education through a process of inquiry, instruction and imagination. Rahner's observations on mystery are recognizable in the process of education. As hinted to above, the word *education* comes from two Latin words *e ducere*, which mean *to draw out*. Think of the times that a teacher drew out of you something that either you longed to share with someone, or, more surprisingly, you didn't know was there within you! On the other side of this, is there anything in teaching like the moment when you, as the teacher, see a student "get it"? Or when you've prepared a particular lesson and suddenly something new, completely unexpected comes tumbling out of your mouth! It is as if the-Impossible-to-know has just arrived, has just taken over. Events such as these, however, don't just happen capriciously. They develop, rather more in the form of the movement from instruction to education through the imagination to revelation, or disclosure of a truth waiting to be known. The next section explores this movement and how it gives way to the Incomprehensible, the Impossible-to-know.

All of us educators know the routine of our work: reading current material, preparation of the syllabus, making lesson plans, and developing forms of evaluation. The elements of routine serve to provide structure and coherence to the communication or instruction of our material. We can take the material through the structures, which help the students grasp the fundamental points of the discipline at hand. Eventually however, in higher education instruction moves to education when both teacher and students begin to challenge the material with inquiry, questions, and even doubt. At this point the structure for instruction must give way to the process of imagination. One of the difficulties of yielding to the imagination, however, is that in popular parlance the imagination is associated with fancy, or capricious, whimsical, arbitrary delusion. Students, and faculty for that matter, enter the danger zone of "my own opinion" divorced from what the instruction of the course has tried to set as the parameters for asking the questions. Interestingly we call our areas of studies "disciplines." In Latin the word has a connotation of listening, learning some knowledge, from the one who has studied the topic. Moving to the imagination does not dismiss the rules of the discipline or expertise of the material completely. Consider this example. Christopher is six years old. On a rainy day in the midst of all of his toys and video games, he approaches his mother with a request: "Mom, I need a box." "What for, Chris?" "Well, Mom, I want to use my imagination." So, a box from the basement is brought upstairs. Chris pilots the box as a rocket ship through a few galaxies then needs a car to get around on the asteroid he has found. Uh-oh. There's a lake. He rows across the lake only to find himself in need of a cabin for the night. The box suffices. Unbeknownst to Chris, who is not analyzing his play, no matter where he goes in this wide, wonderful universe, the fundamental rules of his game are the rules of his mother's house. He is not allowed to use her make up when he can't find a crayon to mark a control panel. (One only makes *that* mistake once.) He is not allowed to close the cat up as his prisoner in the fire place. There are certain rules he has learned, yet his imagination still takes him far. So it is with the movement from instruction and inquiry to imagination, which is not "my own opinion."

Paul Ricoeur provides insight into this movement in education from instruction and inquiry to imagination which heightens the anticipation of students and teacher to learn something new. Ricoeur is one of several twentieth century philosophers who appreciate the faculty of the imagination as playing an essential role in interpretation, or understanding something in a new way. Ricoeur concentrates his efforts in fiction. A good story is drawn out of one's imagination, but it is also governed by the rules of the genre, such as grammar, sentence structure, as well as character development and proper emphasis on detail. Although it may go far afield, still in some way it must make sense to the reader. But the imagination functions in another way as well. It is "the power of redescribing reality,"[16] of seeing something new in familiar surroundings. To explain Ricoeur's point let's stay in the area of fiction, and particularly biblical fiction. Ricoeur's "problem" (Marcel) is: how does a familiar biblical text continue to reveal something new? His premise, as a philosopher, not as a theologian, is that God is "the voice behind the voice"[17] in any text of the bible. The recurring message of "the voice behind the voice" seems to constantly open new possibilities for the reader/listener of scripture. This is why sacred texts of any religion or classic texts of any discipline have the power to change our lives. But again, how does a familiar text continue to reveal something new, or yield new interpretations?

To resolve his question Ricoeur moves beyond a certain notion of interpretation that searches for what the author of a text meant. (In this sense the biblical author is the human author). Although this may satisfy a certain element of curiosity it carries with it certain difficulties such as, what if the author is unknown, what happens when an event occurs that changes all previous understandings of who one is or who a people are. In reference to the Bible for example, Jewish readers of the Hebrew scripture "read" the texts in light of the Exodus story, while Christians "read" the same scriptures in light of the Jesus story. Very different interpretations of the same stories occur. While these two examples remain, Ricoeur's concern persists as well. He resolves the dilemma through the *imagination*, "the power of redescribing reality." The interpreter or reader of a familiar text or even a new text knows the text on the level of what Ricoeur calls "the first naivete."[18] This means the reader understands the words, the grammar, even a certain meaning of what the text says. The reader also brings her or his experience to the text as well as a "hermeneutics of suspicion," a process of inquiry, that is, an ability to ask questions or to raise doubts. Ricoeur's challenge is to approach such texts now with a "second naivete."[19] Here the imagination is introduced to the familiar text of instruction: how can I see this again for the first time within the familiar structure or discipline of the text, but now with new meaning. One must be willing to let go of previous interpretations of the text, of reality and allow oneself to be open to new possibilities of meaning. We take an example from the field of Women's Studies and the bible. Many of us who grew up in biblically based religions (Judaism and Christianity) heard stories of the great heroes of the bible. But where were the heroines? Once women and men became aware of women as "the missing link" in the bible, stories of women began to be drawn out (*e ducere!*). Eventually women also were aware of feminine images of God that occur in great numbers. The experience of women and raising questions of suspicion such as "where are the women in this story or passage?" have radically changed biblical studies in the last forty years. And now questions are raised about children in scripture and other "missing" groups.

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[16] Paul Ricoeur, "The Bible and the Imagination," *Figuring the Sacred*, Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press (1995) 144.

[17] Paul Ricoeur, "Naming God," *Figuring the Sacred*, Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press (1995) 225.

[18] Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, Boston: Beacon Press (1967) 351.

[19] Ibid.

Another literary genre that Ricoeur works with are the narrative parables in the Christian Gospels. A narrative parable follows the rules of any narrative, still, as a parable, its conclusion shocks the listener. Take for example the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Jesus is asked a question: who is my neighbor? In response he tells a story. A man was traveling from Jericho to Jerusalem and he fell into the hands of robbers who badly beat him. Two professional men of God pass by him and ignore him. But a Samaritan stopped to help him. Not only that, he took him to an inn. Not only that, he paid for the beaten man's needs and he came back to check on him in a few days. So, who is the neighbor of this man? By choosing a Samaritan, Jesus had injected the story with "semantic impertinence."[20] By calling the Samaritan the neighbor Jesus has just "redescribed reality" for his listeners who were sworn enemies of the Samaritans. His listeners understood the words, but he introduced new knowledge that unsettled them. The image Jesus evoked stimulated the imagination of his listeners to accept, or reject, the reality he attempted to redescribe.

There is still more to the narrative parables however than the parables themselves. They occur within a larger narrative parable, the narrative parable of Jesus' own life.[21] The individual narrative parables take on even deeper meaning when one considers the life of the story teller, Jesus, the teacher, himself. He not only teaches a redescription of the world, his life lives out what he teaches. To continue this line further would take us more deeply into the specifics of theology and faith than would be appropriate for this paper. For the purpose of this article, on the other hand, Ricoeur's observation of the specific narrative parable told within the narrative parable of Jesus' life parallels Karl Rahner's observations on mystery and the mission of education.

For both Rahner and Ricoeur their last points are actually starting points. As Rahner's understanding of holy mystery is the originary point of mystery that is so featureless we could miss it, yet we are enveloped in it, so too for Ricoeur, the narrative of Jesus' life is the starting point for understanding the specific parables he uses in teaching. In education, there is always a grand Unknown. To lose sight of this Whole and to become buried in a collection of data or doctrines is to suffocate the opportunity of the imagination in education. Through the imagination, the process of redescribing reality, we recognize that what we appear to know is only a small piece of the Incomprehensible Whole. Indeed, we have already redescribed reality to a very literal, sometimes fatalistic, nihilistic world, if we recognize the Something More[22] or Impossible-to-know. With this realization our data and doctrines become pregnant invitations to push the data and doctrines to new awareness, new knowledge, not only of the data and doctrines, but of ourselves, as students and teachers, of our world and of the Incomprehensible Mystery. However, this new awareness, new knowldege can fill one with awe or fear. Interestingly, in biblical texts, the Greek word *phobia* is translated as fear, as in being afaid, or as awe, filled with reverence for the encounter taking place. Such is one of the challenges and dangers of the pregnant invitation of Incomprehensilbe Mystery through education.

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[20] Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor – Multi-disciplinary studies of the creation of meaning in language*, Tr. Robert Czerny, Toronto: University of Toronto Press (1975) 152.

[21] Paul Ricoeur, "The Bible and the Imagination," 150.

The Refusal to Journey and the Horror of Self-encounter

A majority of students in our courses are not theology majors and this one particular theology course is the only one they will ever take. But rather than be an incentive to give them the equivalent of a light beer or theology-light course, we are motivated by the fact that we will have one chance to teach them this reflective method, to help them to articulate the authentic experiences of mystery in their lives. For the students who "catch it" (interestingly, the word "catechism" literally means "to catch" what strikes us as true in the depths of our being), who truly open themselves up to the theological method we expound, their usual response to the course is that they never realized how indispensable theological insights could be for their lives. But many of our students find it a tough row to hoe and find it difficult to utilize the methods suggested. There are many reasons for this. There are, occasionally, in any course, students who simply present themselves as unteachable. They will do what they have to do to pass the course but are not seriously interested in allowing any course to really change them and how they choose to see reality. But, for the most part, the students who have difficulty in our courses really do want to understand. Among the many reasons we can list there are two which seem to us to be the most crucial—the refusal to journey and the horror of self-encounter. It will be good to say a few words about each of them.

What do we mean by the "refusal to journey?" The concept of journey in the discipline of theology has scriptural warrants.[23] Abraham, the Father of faith for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, began his faith journey by literally journeying from the land of Ur in Chaldea to the land of Canaan (Genesis 12). The religion of Israel begins with a journey. Journeys continue throughout the Hebrew scriptures—Exodus, Ruth to Naomi, Tobit, Babylonian Exile. In the New Testament, Jesus theologically reinterprets the journey concept in his Jewish tradition—the temptation in the desert, the invitations to come and follow, roads to and from Jerusalem, the Eucharist (*Viaticum:* Food for the journey), from death to life, the road to Emmaus.

The theological journey of which we write is not necessarily or even primarily a geographical one. But spiritual or geographical, the concept of journey implies movement, change. There is no journey of any kind without movement and change. In order to travel to another city I must leave this one. I cannot be in both at once. If I refuse to leave then I will never get to the other city. It is really rather simple but much more threatening when leaving that which makes us spiritually comfortable. To reflect theologically means to open ourselves up to seeing reality in a new way, much like Ricoeur's idea on the imagination as "redescribing reality. But sometimes we simply don't want to see things differently. And sometimes we are too afraid to abandon what we know for what we don't know. But if we are to learn anything new then journey is indispensable. I have to leave what I am so sure of in order to arrive at new knowledge. A humorous, but insightful, line from Will Rodgers puts it well. He said, "It ain't what you don't know that will hurt you. It's what you do know that ain't so [that will hurt you]."

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[22] Brennan Hill, Paul Knitter, William Madges, *Faith, Religion and Theology*. Mystic, CN: Twenty-third Publications, (1998) 167.

[23] Demitrius Dumm, O.S.B., *Flowers in the Desert: A Spirituality of the Bible*. New York: Paulist Press (1987) 57-76.

To authentically learn is to be changed. If a student is not changed by a course then they have not learned. She/he may have been very efficient in collecting information but they have not learned. Of course, this has ramifications for the teacher as well. Theologically, the teacher is never simply one who dispenses information or one who simply passes on a body of knowledge. That can be done just as well through books and computer programs. But theologically, a teacher is one who incites students to journey, who teaches how to journey. Afterall, what we do is educate. The very essence of what should happen in education is to draw students out beyond where they are to new places, new concepts, new interpretive schemes.

As in most real journeys the pilgrim is also interested in arriving at destinations. Likewise, as in most real journeys, half the fun is in the journeying. It is the unexpected, unplanned for surprises along the way that provide color and nuance to our journeys. Sometimes the surprises along the way are not pleasant and even threatening. But they too are the "stuff" of the journey. They, like the pleasant surprises, are not obstacles. Rather they are opportunities for greater self-knowledge, deeper wisdom, for humility. Journeys, precisely because they are always unpredictable, have a great capacity for rooting us in the world (The authentically humble person—*humus*—has her/his feet solidly planted on the ground. She/he truly knows who she/he is and where she/he stands.) Journeying reminds us that we are part of human history, that we share that history with other sojourners. Theologically, the task of the teacher is to lead our students to the journey and to instill in them the courage to actually go on it.

Etty Hillesum has suggested that writing, especially writing about one's self is a difficult exercise. It is so because writing is revelatory. We discover things about ourselves when we write, and some of the things we discover are hard to face.[24] Henri Nouwen has suggested something similar about authentic learning. One of the primary obstacles to learning, he writes, that is within the student is the "horror of self-encounter."[25] As stated earlier, reflecting on God requires also that we reflect on ourselves. Writing about God is also writing about ourselves. We cannot encounter revelation about God without also encountering revelation about ourselves. Theological revelation is no small thing. It is always significant. It is an encounter with the *Mysterium Tremendum et Fascinans* (a tremendous, terrifying yet fascinating mystery), as Rudolf Otto describes the divine.[26] We are all attracted to discovering things about ourselves. But we are terrified at the same time. Self-revelation means that we cannot remain the same. We cannot unthink the thought that we have thought. Once such a self-revelation takes place we cannot ignore it. This is the horror of self-encounter of which Nouwen writes. It is an encounter with a dimension of ourselves hitherto unknown to us.

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[24] Etty Hillesum, *An Interrupted Life*, New York: Henry Holt & Company, (1996) 3.

[25] Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Creative Ministry*, New York: Image Books, (1991) 19-20.

[26] Rudolph Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, Tr. John Harvey, New York: Oxford University Press, 2nd edition, 1970.

It is not even so much that what is revealed is always negative. Even if it is a positive revelation it still means that I cannot remain the same. I must change in some way. But so often students assume that what is unknown about themselves will be something that they don't want to know, that it will be something sinister, evil, or weak. And of course sometimes it is. But even that must be brought to light if they are to grow in their humanity.

Either way, the concepts of journey and horror of self-encounter suggest that authentic learning is not a casual affair. It may sound a bit trite but it requires a sense of adventure. But like Bilbo Baggins of *Hobbit* fame, we don't always like adventure or mystery. As Bilbo says, those kinds of things have a way of upsetting our comfortable lives. They make you "late for dinner." It's much more pleasant to stay where we are in our metaphorical comfortable chairs, sitting by our metaphorical cozy fires, sipping on our favorite beverage. But we should add that authentic learning does not eschew comfort. It actually creates opportunities for new and different levels of comfort, new ways of "being at home" with ourselves and the world. Getting beyond our fears of journeying helps us to discover that we can actually love ourselves, befriend ourselves by becoming our own best journey companion. Transcending our fear of the horror of self-encounter enables us to accept ourselves in our personal and relational history, with all of the "givens" of that history--our biological selves, our families, our fears, hopes and joys.[27] The self that we are is the only self that we can love. To refuse to know it is to refuse to love it.

Learning as an Act of Love

As implied in the last paragraph theology recognizes an inextricable link between learning and loving. Christian theology has long held that God's revelation to humanity is not so much a communication of information as it is God's self-revelation. Karl Rahner describes how radical this revelation is by saying that what God reveals to us is His/Her self-knowledge. In other words, God reveals to us what He/She knows about Him/Herself.[28] Theologically, self-revelation, whether of God or human beings, is considered an act of love because it requires going out from ourselves towards others.

In a different context, considering what learning requires, Simone Weil, refers to learning as an act of love because it requires paying attention to something outside of ourselves.[29] There is a very real sense in which we can say that one cannot be self-centered and learn. Only by radically recognizing the autonomous existence of something apart from me can I learn. Authentic learning requires that I go out from myself to the other as other, and not simply as an extension of my perception.[30] For example, it has been suggested by educators that teaching children to memorize things like the times tables and historical and scientific facts actually prepares them for loving others. The reason is that numbers and facts don't have an immediate bearing on their existence. In other words, they don't really see the connections between learning these things and their life as children and it is difficult for them to truly understand how this accumulation of numbers and facts will be useful later on in life. In a sense, it is useless learning. But it teaches them that they can pay attention to something even when there is nothing in it for them, so to speak.

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[27] Karl Rahner, "Why Am I a Christian Today?" *The Practice of the Faith*, New York: Crossroad, (1992) 4-5.

[28] Karl Rahner, "The Development of Dogma," *Theological Investigations I*, Baltimore: Helicon Press (1961) 61.

[29] Simone Weil, "Reflections on the Right Use of Schools of Studies with a View to the Love of God," *The Simone Weil Reader*, ed. George A. Panichas, New York: David McKay Co. (1977) 44-52.

[30] See Diogenes Allen, *Love: Christian Romance, Marriage and Friendship*, Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications (1992) 31.

Theologically, to know is to love. But it is a circular endeavor because we want to know what we love. When I love something I want to know more about it. And when I know something more I love it more. There is a line from the film *Sex, Lies, and Videotapes* that may be appropriate here in an extrapolated way. "A man loves the person he is interested in; a woman becomes interested in the person she loves." Whether or not love can be divided between gender lines in this fashion we are not sure. But for the sake of this article the way a woman loves is what we are talking about. Love precedes knowledge. Theologically, love is a necessary precondition for learning.

Koinonia: Becoming Community

The last theological concept we want to consider is what we might call "community." The early Christian church described their community as *koinonia*. It is important to recall the term because it is distinct from the more general, but no less important, "love of neighbor," and from friendship and other social relationships. *Koinonia* necessarily incorporates both love of neighbor and friendship, but the reverse would not be correct. What makes *koinonia* distinct is that it is based on the simple fact that Christians in the early church were unified by their shared belief in Jesus of Nazareth. They shared a common belief in the scriptures, in God's revelation in Christ, and in their worship. Their sense of community, while containing the elements of friendship and the practice of civility toward one's neighbors, was rooted in the call of *diakonia*, the responsibility to be of service to one another.

In what sense should or can we consider the classroom a community? We certainly could not expect the criteria for being *koinonia* to be required in our classrooms. Nor could we expect that all of our students are going to develop particular friendships within a particular class.

Actually, what we need to do is not so much try to establish a particular classroom as a community in itself. Rather, we need to envision community in a larger sense with the classroom seeing itself as belonging to something larger than itself. What is this "larger than itself" that it belongs to? Perhaps it will be helpful to turn to the theologian, David Tracy, again in an extrapolated way. Tracy asserts that the discipline of theology has to operate within three "publics." For him, they are Church, Society, and the Academy.[31] Tracy is implying that theology cannot act within a vacuum. It must always consider these three publics when it functions. Theology cannot separate itself from the Christian Church, regardless of how it perceives church. Even theologians are social beings and cannot avoid affecting or being affected by society. Finally, it must function within the rules of the academy. Even though theology can never be separated from faith, it can never use faith to exempt itself from rational discourse within the academy.

In a nutshell, Tracy is saying that the discipline of theology belongs to something larger than itself. In a parallel way, no matter what discipline we teach we cannot teach it apart from its relationship to a public beyond the classroom. But allow us to return once again to Rahner. In one of his articles, Rahner makes the statement that "Christianity is always more than itself."[32] By this he means that Christianity is "commanded to look for itself in the other and to trust that it will once more meet itself and its greater fullness in the other."[33] Whether we refer to this "larger than itself" as the "public" or the "other," the classroom becomes community to the extent that it recognizes itself as connected to what is other than itself. That means that making connections between what we learn and what we will do with what we learn and where we will do it is not really an option, not simply a nice addition to "book learning." It is an absolute necessity, theologically, to make such connections if we are to speak of the classroom becoming community in any real sense of the word.

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[31] David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism*. New York: Crossroad (1986) chapter 1.

We need to pay special attention to Rahner's words—"to look for itself in the other and *trust that it will once more meet itself and its greater fullness in the other.*" It is precisely in making connections with what is "larger than itself" (the other) that the classroom meets itself and becomes itself in greater fullness. The classroom becomes a community to the extent that it finds itself in the greater community.

This concept resonates with one of the most crucial questions being raised by many colleges and universities today. How does the college/university impact the immediate surrounding area? More and more colleges and universities are being challenged today to demonstrate that they are in fact not the proverbial ivory tower. Constituents want to know how they serve the residential and business community that surround the college. How will what our students learn affect the local schools and businesses, the healthcare centers, the social agencies, the churches and community organizations? How will what our students learn serve the poor, or women and children, or families (however we might define them)? What impact will the knowledge our students gain in our institutions have on race relations, political ideologies, the work environment?

The task of creating a sense of community in the classroom is not primarily one of simply fostering new friendships and pleasant memories. It is rather one of facilitating a radical connection with the community at large, with something larger than the classroom. It is the hard work of recognizing the otherness of things outside ourselves so that what our students learn can truly be of service to others. The value of educated people is not that they have answers that they are going to impose on others. That, according to the late monk and mystic, Thomas Merton, is more violent than the problems that we want to solve.[34] The value of truly educated people is that they will use their knowledge in service of the needs that others indicate to them. Only when our students understand that they need to learn from the *other* will they then know what to do with their knowledge.

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[32] Karl Rahner, "Ideology and Christianity," *Theological Investigations VI*, Baltimore: Helicon Press, (1969) 44.
[33] Ibid.
[34] See the Merton reference in Terry Tastard, *The Spark in the Soul: Four Mystics on Justice*, New York: Paulist Press (1990) 100.

Conclusion: Education as a Passion for the Impossible

In part, this article came about from on going conversations or brief snipets of conversations we have had with our colleagues "on the hill" (the main road, the only road on our campus!). We have heard and we have seen each other compelled by a passion for the impossible, a deep desire to learn and a love for the Incomphrehensilbe of our particular disciplines, always graciously enhanced by the inquiries and imaginations of our students. What we have come to recognize as unique to the discipline of theology is that theology offers a language and a hermeneutics for articlating that deep passion that draws us out into an encounter with the Impossbile-to-know, the Incomprehensible Mystery. Theology, like the other disciplines of the university, is not limited to learning doctrines and data. It is seeing and loving the mystery of the Incomprehensible God, the impossible to know, in the smallest particle of matter, in the human tapestry of societies and of cities and their governments, in the unrepeatable structure of DNA in every person, in the wonderful invention of language and its rules and the stories it tells, in the unique properties and characteristics of the chemical elements, in the science of the production and distribution of the world's goods, in the writing and reading and speaking and breathing of words, in the pattern and symmetry of numbers and equations and formulae, in counting time to music, in the cadence of poetry and prose.

One writer has suggested that the purpose of Catholic education is to produce "sacramental beholders."[35] Somewhere along the line of their studies students need to encounter something more than information and be drawn into the mystery of the vastness of human learning and questioning and doubting and discovering. Jean Leclercq, the noted medieval scholar, poetically describes the foundation of the first university system as "the love of learning and the desire for God.[36] Becoming a sacramental beholder is to develop a passion for the impossible, to understand that everything we learn leads to a desire to learn more while at the same time knowing that we can never totally fulfill that desire.

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[35] Anthony J. Cernera & Oliver Morgan (editors) *Examining the Catholic Intellectual Tradition*. Sacred Heart university Press, 2000.

[36] Jean Leclerq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, New York: Fordham University Press, 1982.

Leading Learning by Assuring Distance Instructional Technology Is An Ethical Enterprise

By

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Introduction

Ethical issues are ubiquitous to teaching. For some time, authors have argued that teaching intrinsically is a moral activity and that ethics are central to all competent teaching (Tom, 1984; Goodlad, Soder, & Sirotnik, 1990; Fenstermacher, 1990; Vandenberg, 1990; Strike & Soltis, 1992; and Sockett, 1993). Likewise authors have discussed the importance of ethical practices associated with teaching and learning in the field of adult education (Singarella & Sork, 1983; Scanlon, 1985; and Brockett, 1988). Yet in the rapidly expanding area of distance education, often populated by adult learners, the study of ethics has received relatively meager treatment (See for example, Reed & Sork, 1990; and Gearhart, 2001).

Intuitively, many agree that technology can significantly impact teaching and learning. Yet, there is no standardized code of ethics to guide faculty and administrators as they confront dilemmas in creating, refining, and teaching in distance education programs. If education, and the technology through which we deliver it, has the potential to change learners, it also carries the potential to do them harm (Reed and Sork, 1990). Thus, discussions of ethics must be accorded a central place in the development and implementation of distance education programs. We cannot afford the moral order of distance education to be shaped by happenstance. The mere emergence of common practices is insufficient in the absence of vigorous debate and critical evaluation. It is imperative that we confront these issues much more systematically. We must actively seek greater consensus regarding proper conduct if we are to continue to participate in this educational transformation.

This article briefly reviews the rapid growth of distance education that contributes to our call for ethical decision-making and policy formation. Second, it explores *some* of the most significant ethical challenges confronting those who participate in the development, refinement, and evaluation of distance education programs. These include issues associated with accessibility, profit, learning and gender styles, intellectual property rights, workload and compensation matters, adequacy of faculty and student preparation, and accreditation and quality assurance. Finally, several case studies are posed with challenging questions for critical reflection. Hopefully, these will stimulate more comprehensive campus dialogues between, and among, faculty, administrators, and boards of trustees. Ultimately, it is we, who must be responsible for shaping ethical policy to guide distance education initiatives.

Growth of Distance Education

Although the concept and practice of distance education are not new to many postsecondary institutions, these initiatives have surged during the 1990s (Gladieux & Swail, 1999). According to survey data from the National Center for Education Statistics, several indicators of growth were discovered for the period between 1995 and 1997-98. Specifically, institutions that offered distance education in some format increased from 33 percent in 1995 to 44 percent in 1997-98. Not surprisingly, this growth was associated far more often with 4-year public institutions (79%) than with private institutions (22%) (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). This growth trend in institutional participation continues today. More than one-half of the nation's colleges and universities currently offer courses by way of the Internet and dozens offer undergraduate and graduate degrees entirely online (Press, Washburn, and Broden, 2001).

Perhaps more dramatic is the approximate doubling of course offerings and enrollment figures between 1995 and 1997-98. Data indicate that by 1997-98 there were nearly 48,000 different courses offered and enrollment figures for college-credit courses reached a high of more than 1.3 million. Further, while the use of one-way prerecorded (48%) and two-way interactive video (56%) remained relatively constant, the largest change in the type of technology used for educational purposes occurred in the use of asynchronous Internet-based technologies. This format substantially increased in popularity from 22 percent use in 1995 to 60 percent in 1997-98 (U.S. Department of Education, 1999).

Of course, it is important to consider these numbers in a larger context to obtain greater perspective. Eaton (2001) reminds us that there are more than 5000 postsecondary institutions in America. She observes therefore, that the number of courses and enrollees noted above amounts to an institutional average of a small number of students being served by a small number of courses. Eaton asserts, "Nonetheless, the speed with which growth in distance learning has taken place suggests that the technology is very seductive and on its way to becoming more pervasive" (p.5).

The advent of new and rapidly evolving technologies, combined with an upsurge in new types of higher education providers, makes it difficult to predict where this transformation may take us next. It is a good bet that higher education, as we know it, will not disappear in the next 30 years, but the face of it may change dramatically (Gladieux & Swail, 1999). In short, whatever else people may think about distance education, it is clear that, "the genie will not go back into the bottle: demand for technology will continue, not diminish; the opportunities for distance and online education will grow, not recede" (Green, 1997, J-9).

The Role of Ethics

Ethics are about what is right and wrong, good and bad, acceptable and unacceptable, permissible and not permissible, as determined by conscience or reason (Pojman, 1990). Ethical issues arise whenever one's freely chosen decisions and actions have the potential to significantly influence another for better or worse. Since the primary focus of teaching is to have an impact on the learner, ethical issues are inherent in the process. Distance education initiatives offer a series of alternative means for carrying out the teaching/learning enterprise. Thus, decisions about how these initiatives should be developed, reshaped, conducted, and evaluated are ripe with ethical implications.

It is not sufficient to be in the midst of this higher education transformation without examining the ethical issues associated with this shift. Wherever one stands with regard to the distance education movement, the choices one makes and the communication one has with others in this arena are not neutral. These have the capacity to influence others' decision-making and actions with regard to whether or not we conduct distance education, and the manner in which it should be conducted. Thus, we have the responsibility to consciously attempt to shape distance education in ethical ways. If we choose to do nothing, our inactivity, nonetheless, has contributed to the ethical environment of distance education. On the other hand, if we actively seek ethical procedures and outcomes, surely we can go a long way in creating them.

Accessibility and Ethics

There are numerous reasons for the growth of distance education. Kriger (2001) reports that some expansion is driven by the desire of administrators to prevent an institution's faculty from selling their courses to other suppliers. In other cases it is advanced by the desire of creative faculty to offer high-quality education through experimentation with new technologies. He adds that there is often pressure "…to maintain existing enrollments *vis-à-vis* for-profit distance education providers and other existing institutions. Among elite colleges, there is a desire to protect the quality of their 'brand name' and still fall in line behind the DE bandwagon" (p. 7). Others have posited that administrators see this as an opportunity to address current or predicted physical capacity constraints associated with bricks and mortar campuses, or as a means to stimulate institutional transformation in order to remain competitive (Oblinger & Kidwell, 2000).

Notwithstanding these, one of the primary motives most often reported for this endeavor is the desire to expand accessibility to students. Targeted are those previously not reached by conventional systems, as well as newly emerging student markets. Overcoming time, transcending geographical barriers, and improving student convenience are the goals (Faith, 1988; U.S. Department of Education, 1997; Oblinger & Kidwell, 2000; Moore, 2000; Kriger, 2001).

Without the *option* of distance education, colleges and universities may be unfairly denying access to qualified learners. Failing to create methods, to include those not typically addressed by conventional means, may violate an institution's obligation to "do good," or at the very least, the obligation to "do no harm." In addition, Dunning, Vankekerix & Zaborowski (1993) point out that many who are underserved by conventional educational systems are people of color, non-native English speakers, and lower-income individuals. Therefore, they argue that any lack of equal access may be construed as racism and social control. These violate tenets of social justice.

Clearly then, "access and inclusion should be the principal values inspiring the use of new technologies to deliver or enhance instruction" (Gladieux & Swail, 1999, p.23). Nevertheless, there is a troublesome paradox created by attempts to accomplish this outcome. Well-intentioned efforts to create more universal accessibility may simultaneously contribute to undesired and unintentional, yet continued discrimination. More specifically, as distance education offerings increasingly turn to online formats, the likelihood of exacerbating the inequities of access increase.

Data from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, confirm that despite the widely held perception that computers are everywhere, socioeconomic class continues to determine the availability of technology within groups of people. Specifically, this data shows that access to, and experience with, computers and the Internet for Blacks and Hispanics are still about 50% of that for Asians and Whites (Gladieux & Swail, 1999). In addition, regardless of income, members of rural communities tend to be substantially behind their urban counterparts in terms of access to the Internet (Moore, 2000).

This means, the same technology that promises access to higher education for some, also denies it for others. If we continue to support online initiatives, we have an ethical responsibility to work more diligently to reduce this inequality. Higher education should never be responsible for unfair practices that disadvantage those it should be serve.

In addition, Internet-based technology may contribute to other inequities in terms of access. For example, it may generate actual, or perceived differences between the quality of on-campus and online educational opportunities. Press, Washburn, & Broden (2001) claim that it may create a two-tiered educational system in which the affluent receive prestigious campus-based diplomas, while those with lower incomes receive a substandard online diploma. This concern may be linked to potential accreditation problems for some providers. It may also be associated with the concern that many institutions will turn to less-expensive tutors or assistants to run online courses after a professor with greater expertise creates them. Thus, even if access to higher education itself is increased, access to *similar quality* programming and full-time professors may be significantly decreased. As the online movement gains momentum, discussions and wise policy-making should reduce these potentially negative ethical implications.

In terms of accessibility and gender, two concerns seem worthy of discussion as we move forward. Fungaroli (2000) argues that access to distance education by single mothers and working parents may not always be in their best interests. She argues that these individuals face isolation in such a format and would be better served in more conventional educational systems that typically promote social contact and support.

Additionally, in a book about multicultural experiences of women in distance education, Faith (1988) suggests that we inadvertently may be harming women by encouraging them to enroll in this option. She says, "…perhaps the most provocative and paradoxical observation to be made concerning distance education is that while, on the one hand, it encourages individual development and choices, it colludes with traditional gender roles and expectations by facilitating women's confinement to the home" (Faith, 1988, p.ii). Fulfilling the promise technology offers carries with it the obligation to grapple with the manner in which we can use it to promote human growth and dignity, rather than stifle them.

Furthermore, the research evidence with regard to whether distance education actually increases access or improves enrollment is inconclusive (Gladieux & Swail, 1999). Some suggest that colleges and universities have not successfully reached the target audience of *new* learners (Slaughter, Kittay, & Duguid, 2001). It is appropriate to wonder whether a substantial number of *new* learners are entering higher education institutions solely because of distance formats? Have we determined the percentage of enrollments that can be accounted for by normally occurring, historically supported growth patterns? Have we analyzed whether the apparent growth might be attributed to nothing more than the redistribution of existing students? To what extent are learners shifting from on-campus classes to online classes? To what extent are they shifting from institutions that do not offer online options to those that do? In short, is there evidence of a substantial *net gain* in new learners because of distance initiatives?

Finally, though enhancing access to higher education is a laudable goal, one cannot simply offer it as sufficient reason to develop distance programming without confronting the ethical issues that accompany it. To the extent that we do, we participate in contributing to an ever-widening gap between those who have, and those who do not. We have a moral obligation to create wise, ethically sound policy designed to create equal and fair access to higher education.

Profit and Ethics

Most educators support the use of technology to enhance accessibility to higher education. Often, however, there is a fear that the underlying motivation for promoting distance programming is profit rather than improved teaching and learning outcomes (Katz, 2001; Press, Washburn, & Broden, 2001). For the most part, faculty do not feel comfortable with matters such as cost, expediency, and commercial values dictating what, and how, one should teach.

Distance education courses should be based fundamentally on what is in the best interest of the learner. To the extent that they are not, they become ethically suspect. If the guiding force behind an institution's educational decisions is solely, or even primarily, profitability and market share, they may be guilty of selfishly *exploiting* their students as a *means to their own ends*. Moreover, if institutions cater to market demands without critical analysis about the ultimate wisdom of these decisions *vis-à-vis* their students, they may contribute to their harm.

Slaughter, Kittay, & Duguid (2001) argue that it is unwise to allow the market undue influence in determining which programs and courses to continue or discontinue solely on the basis of commercial demand and profitability. If a liberal arts institution did this, it might find that many of its core courses were *perceived* as expendable. Are there not times when the market is simply wrong or misguided? Slaughter, et al., further maintain that a learner's education should not be determined in a piecemeal, fashion, but with the larger whole in mind. Reliance on the will of the marketplace could lead to harmful pressure on an institution to alter its character or subvert its mission (Katz, 2001). We have a duty to staunchly defend our beliefs and values.

Learning and Gender Styles in Online Courses: Equity and Ethics

While the idea that women are often disadvantaged in traditional classroom settings has been well documented (Gilligan, 1982, Hensel 1991, Wood & Lenze, 1991, Tisdel, 1998), it has been expected that online education might make the advantage equal for both men and women. One of the primary difficulties has been in face-to-face communication. In classrooms, one gendered style has been identified to be collaborative/cooperative/connected while the other is identified as being competitive/separate (Belenke, et al, 1986, Tannen, 1990). The connected/cooperative style is most often used by females and the separate/competitive style is used more often by males. In studies of classrooms the competitive style edges out the cooperative/collaborative one.

A study by Blum (1999) indicates that these communication styles are replicated in online classes. In this study, males posted 58% more answers to questions than females; exhibited traits of trying to control the online environment; had a tone of certainty and sometimes arrogance; seldom contained polite forms, and often contained put-downs of others' answers.

Females were often empathetic, used polite words; tried to modify their message when they disagreed with the previous message; and their messages contained terms one uses in interpersonal relationships. The female messages contained many more personal references than the male students messages. Eighty percent of all questions were asked by females. They asked for help from other students. Blum suggests that women preferred to learn from other students rather than going through formal channels. Thus women in this study both communicated and learned in a connected/collaborative style while men learned and communicated in a separate/competitive style.

It appears from this study that both learning and communication styles are connected with gender in online education. Distance education should try to present an environment in which both the separate/competitive style identified with masculinity and the collaborative/connected style associated with femininity could thrive. Anything less would seem inequitable and unethical.

Intellectual Property Rights and Ethics

One of the most fiercely debated ethical issues in distance education is intellectual property rights. For many institutions, policies do not yet exist, or they remain unclear. Consensus about what constitutes an effective and acceptable policy regarding copyright and ownership of online materials and complete courses is low. Faculties are increasingly pitted against their institutions on this thorny issue (Maxwell & McCain, 1997; Noble, 1998; Salomon, 1999; U.S. Department of Education, 1999; American Federation of Teachers, 2000; Katz, 2001; Press, Washburn, & Broden, 2001; Slaughter, Kittay, & Duguid, 2001).

Historically, educators have been responsible for the development and modification of "their" courses. For the most part, this has been conducted as a solitary enterprise. Typically, faculty retain control of course content, its overall quality, (American Federation of Teachers, 2000) and the right to its delivery. In short, the course customarily has been perceived to be the faculty's intellectual property. In fact, faculty routinely have been encouraged to copyright books and articles that resulted from, or contributed to, this work (Katz, 2001).

In the case of distance education, this may no longer be the case. Though some faculty may still work alone, others labor in collaboration with instructional designers, information systems technical staff (Carnevale, 2001; American Federation of Teachers, 2000), media center personnel, and/or faculty development colleagues. In addition, the curricular products these collaboratives produce often are housed on university or college computer servers. Some institutions have extended their claims of ownership from faculty research to materials and the courses they comprise and have prohibited individuals from taking their instructional material outside their own institution (Shedletsky & Aitken, 2001).

As a result, significant questions arise concerning the rightful ownership of these products. For example, is it fair to share property rights among all who had a hand in the course development or should they be retained solely for the content specialist? Is it justified for institutions to claim ownership, as they traditionally have for patents produced by employees, or are these *curricular products* different in some significant way? Who should control the course's content, use, and re-use? Does the institution have the obligation to relinquish control of curricular products when an individual leaves an institution? Should professors have the right to package and sell their courses and/or course products to others, including competing institutions? What responsibilities do faculty have with regard to the sale of this work? In other words, are the demands for portability of courseware and the right to market it justified? Moreover, who should profit from this creative work? Is it acceptable for faculty to deny access to those who wish to use their courseware to enhance their teaching or to reduce their preparation time for a similar course? Is it fair to allow institutions to hire less expensive labor to facilitate a course once it has been produced? What values and whose rights are violated (or upheld) in the process of deciding the answer to these questions? What are the potential consequences of the decisions we make and the policies we create in this area?

For some, these are issues destined to be resolved in court battles. Yet these are *ethical* issues that demand timely resolution though collaborative contemplation and vigorous debate within, and between, our institutions. As Katz (2001) notes, this process has begun and good policy statements have been adopted in some institutions. There remains however, no consensus about what is necessary for these to be "faculty-friendly." Further delays may put energetic and innovative faculty at peril if they decide to forge ahead without clear agreements. Likewise, institutions may continue to meet unnecessary resistance when requesting specific online program development or wider participation from faculty in this educational format. Finally, according to the American Federation of Teachers (2000), learners may be placed at risk if the faculty who create courses are not the ones who are responsible to maintain and update them. How can they be assured that they are receiving the same quality as in the past?

Workload/Compensation and Ethics

Another cluster of ethical challenges arise when we consider the impact of technology-based distance education on faculty workload and traditional models of appropriate faculty compensation. These include issues associated with "…promotion and tenure, release time, course load, course updating and revision, publishing, faculty mentoring, and consistency across departments" (U.S. Department of Education, 1999, p.8). More specifically, educators and administrators wrestle with questions about *fairness* when determining suitable credit toward promotion and tenure for these design and delivery initiatives? To what extent is it exploitative to expect faculty to conduct this work on a standard load without significant release time, adequate assistance, and/or additional compensation? In institutions where this is viewed as overload work (even if financially compensated), are faculty placed in jeopardy of not fulfilling the college or university's mandate for other scholarly activity and/or publication? Is there adequate mentoring and institutional support available for faculty involved in such endeavors, or are they destined to be institutional mavericks and innovators who might get burned by the lack of well-defined and understood policies? Are the obligations for creating and teaching distance programs equitable across all departments in the institution? As the demand for distance delivery systems has increased has faculty participation shifted from voluntary to mandatory? If so, what adjustments should be made with regard to workload expectations?

Michael Moore (2000), editor of the *American journal of distance education*, and prominent consultant in the area, suggests there characteristically is too little time and creative energy devoted to strategic educational design and development of distance initiatives. He maintains that the absolute minimum guideline should be a 50:1 ratio between design and contact time. In courses that incorporate video and audio, he argues the guideline should be increased because the preparation time necessary is significantly greater. In a more recent article, he indicates that educators who enter into the distance delivery system customarily are expected to engage in multiple roles. They must "…be able to prepare, present, and facilitate participation. Faculty are also expected to monitor progress, evaluate performance, counsel with those who have problems, and perhaps undertake other duties, with, as a consequence, considerable stress on themselves, on students, and on administration" (Moore, 2001, p. 2 online version).

For various reasons, educators increasingly fall short of this proposed design-to-contact ratio. First, faculty and administrators seem to underestimate the time-intensive nature of these initiatives. Technologically savvy faculty may require less time to create and update courses in distance formats than others, primarily because of their pre-existing expertise in this area. Thus, determining the time needs of an average educator by comparison with these pioneering and talented individuals is unrealistic and unfair. Furthermore, the misconception that online instruction demands nothing more that typing lecture notes into pre-formatted web pages contributes to the debate about workload fairness. Feldman, Konold, & Coulter (1999), maintain that time constraints divert educators' attention from the important tasks of researching and studying course content. Instead, they must invest time in becoming skilled at alternative teaching methods that heavily incorporate, or rely solely on, technology. Moreover, faculty frequently must develop aptitude in teaching their students how to use the technologies as part of the course. Additionally, they must gain competency in the use of specific hardware and software products, and endlessly adapt to upgraded versions.

Beyond the inadequate time estimates and misconceptions noted above, Moore (2000) believes that too many students settle for mediocrity in online courses in exchange for convenience. He suggests this perception also negatively impacts the time allocated by some faculty and administrators for converting existing courses or in designing new ones in the distance arena. As a result of these factors, courses frequently may not fulfill their potential and periodically are of inferior quality. Under these circumstances, they fall short of the intended consequence of enhanced student learning.

Adequacy of Faculty/Student Preparation and Ethics

As noted earlier, institutions increasingly are expecting faculty members to put courses online. In spite of technical support many educators do not have the additional preparation that allows them to succeed in an online environment. Some research has shown that teachers have had difficulty in changing they way they teach online (Candiotti & Clark, 1998).

In personal discussions with those making the switch to online courses on our own campus, there is often a rush to take the syllabus from a traditional classroom and to insert it, unmodified, in an online course. There is frequently little education given to faculty about major challenges in developing distance education courses. For example how many of us have been alerted to the relationship between the technological medium we are using and the message we wish to deliver? Are we aware of the challenges posed by the relationship of the students to the technology, the students' relationship with each other, or the relationship of the instructor to the students in distance learning (Schrum & Hoong, 2002)? Much research indicates these elements are crucial to good distance education (Palloff & Pratt, 1999, Gibbs, 1998, Schrum, 1998). Failing to thoroughly prepare faculty to design and deliver distance education while pressuring them to put courses online is an ethical issue of great magnitude. Should courses be taught on an experimental basis? Should these "courses-in-progress" carry the same costs for students as thoroughly prepared and well-conceptualized courses? Should students be notified in advance that a course is being offered for the first time in this format and therefore is experimental in nature? Would such notification enhance the students' significance of choice about whether and when to take this course?

By the same token, questions arise around preparation of students for online courses. Graduate students (Bajuszik, 2000, Savlosksis, 1998) in instructional design classes taught by one of the authors of this article have done extensive research on the orientation given to students taking their first online class and found that most schools give little instruction to prepare students for what they will encounter.

Lynne Schrum and Sunjoo Hong (2000) identify seven dimensions that appear to play an important role in student success and satisfaction in distance education. They list access to appropriate tools, technology experience, learning preferences, study habits and skills, goals and purposes, lifestyle factors and personal traits and characteristics. While the students in the instructional design classes found colleges and universities frequently tell students what equipment they must use to access the course, other factors are frequently not addressed.

Research seems to indicate that the finer points of design, delivery, and student ability to be successful and satisfied are often left to whim, preference and chance. This results in leaving both faculty and students dissatisfied and unsuccessful. Full faculty development and student preparation could remedy this situation. Will institutions of higher learning invest the time and financial resources to change the status quo?

Accreditation, Quality Assurance and Ethics

Eaton (2001) describes a bewildering array of "new providers" of distance learning. She says, "They include new stand-alone, degree-granting online institutions; degree-granting online consortia (groups of degree-granting institutions that offer courses online, with degrees granted by the consortium itself rather than any of the participating colleges and universities); non-degree-granting online consortia (where degree authority is retained at the institutional level); corporate universities; and online programs and courses that are not affiliated with institutions and may or may not offer degrees or other credentials (Eaton, 2001, p. 5-6). She argues this diversity creates profound challenges to accrediting agencies to assure consumers that promises and expectations of quality are being met.

On the one hand, reviews of contemporary research (Phipps & Merisotis, 1999; Russell, 1999; Wegner, Holloway, & Garton, 1999) report no significant differences in learning outcomes for students who participate in traditional campus-based classroom learning and those who access education through distance technologies. In addition, Kriger's (2001) report for the American Federation of Teachers determined that distance education can be very positive as long as the authority for decision-making remains in the hands of educators rather than those working in the institution's business and marketing offices.

Conversely, some are not so sure. For example, Press, Washburn, & Broden (2001) indicate that Human Resource officers do not regard online degrees as seriously as traditional classroom education. In fact, they report that 77% of those they surveyed believe the degrees are not equivalent and 60% are concerned that the online degrees may be diluted. In addition, some people think that technology-based delivery systems encourage less education and more training of individuals. They suggest the focus has shifted away from demands for higher order thinking and toward the learning of more easily codified, rote information (Slaughter, Kittay, & Druguid (2001). Furthermore, although some claim online courses typically are more writing intensive (Shedletsky & Aitken, 2001), the benefits of this may be undermined as programs tend to increase their class sizes during conversion to distance formats (Kriger, 2001). In short, these, and other technology-based pedagogical decisions, such as the effectiveness of sitting in front of a computer terminal to learn, (Katz, 2001) may be made without adequate consideration of their impact on student outcomes (Gearhart, 2001). With the validity of extant research under challenge (Gold & Maitland, 1999) the need for additional, systematic investigation seems necessary.

As we can see, regardless of the reality, *perceptions* about the quality of distance education endeavors remain mixed. As a result, some learners could suffer potentially unfavorable consequences. For example, negative perceptions could jeopardize the credibility of one's degree and negatively impact employability. In addition, credits from different providers might not be transferable to other programs/institutions leading to dissatisfied students and financial losses should they decide to seek an education elsewhere. We believe it is imperative that consumers have early and sufficient access to reliable information on which to determine the relative credibility and merit of competing distance education options.

Presently, accreditation procedures for online programs and institutions use existing standards (Chronicle of Higher Education, 1999). Yet, to what extent are we certain these are the most suitable and valid measures of quality in this new arena? Should alternative or additional standards be established and applied in the realm of virtual education? By dedicating additional time and attention to the accreditation process, students may be better protected when choosing from among this perplexing collection of new providers.

Case Studies for Ethical Analysis

Decisions about distance education and technology are not without significant consequences. Attempts to ignore the thorny ethical issues inherent in this endeavor are inappropriate and dangerous to the health, well-being, and moral base of higher education. Allowing uncritically examined common practice to automatically dictate what is appropriate in the distance education movement is dangerous. We may not be alert to the threats associated with certain patterns of decisions until they have become firmly entrenched and harder to change.

As faculty, we have the responsibility to lead the way to greater policy consensus that is grounded in ethics. To accomplish this, we must engage one another (as well as administrators and governing boards) in thorough, intentional, systematic, and continuous analysis of these, and other ethical issues attendant with technological innovation and the distance education transformation. We have an obligation to potential employers, members of society at large, and ourselves, to infuse our discussions about policy *with ethics*. Above all, we have a duty to fulfill *vis-à-vis* our primary target…our learners.

To this end, four cases studies are presented here for consideration. Each includes *some* potential questions designed to shape and advance a dialogue about ethics on campuses or even, if you prefer, online. To fail to have these discussions would be, in our estimation, unconscionable.

CASE #1

Mary is a Professor of History at Excalibur College. She has a long and distinguished record of teaching excellence. Mary is not terribly comfortable with technology, yet she is being urged *persistently* by the administration at Excalibur to teach her courses online because of program needs. Mary believes this would be detrimental to the students of these courses. She believes there is too little support available for converting her courses and she is reluctant to venture into an area where the learning curve for her is so high. She is going to retire in a few years. Mary feels threatened that she may be excluded from teaching her specialty courses and/or reassigned to a non-teaching position. Though tenured, she does not know how long she will be able to fend off the directive to teach online.

Some Questions to Consider

- Who gets "harmed" in this scenario? Is potential harm to a faculty member offset by the potential gain for a program?
- What responsibilities does the faculty member have in an institution that is attempting to transform their delivery system and/or the nature of learning? Why?
- What responsibilities does the institution have with regard to this case? Why? To what extent can/should faculty development efforts be directed at this professor? To what extent does she have the freedom to refuse these offers if she perceives that they will be inadequate?
- To what extent would it be defensible for the institution to hire a part-time faculty member to create an online version of Mary's course and reassign Mary to other courses? Who owns the curriculum in an institution?
- Should student demand for this course (or their desires to take it online) be factored into any ethical decisions in this case? Why? Why not?
- To what extent is it "fair" or "just" to expect that Mary will comply with the wishes of the university?
- In what ways might an online course be detrimental as Mary claims? Are these sufficient reasons to refuse to teach the course in this manner? To what extent does Mary have an obligation to defend her claims that this approach to her course content would be detrimental?
- How might the issue of tenure impact institutional decisions to create new programs, parallel programs, or the conversion of existing ones to distance formats? What should be considered in addressing the tenure issue?
- How might this case be resolved satisfactorily?

CASE #2

Pat is a self-taught and self-proclaimed "techno-savvy" faculty member. Pat's academic discipline is Chemistry. She has been reading about the online movement for a couple of years and has become enchanted with the promise it has to offer. She quickly redesigns her course and offers it through the Internet. She types her lecture notes into

WebPages. She has links to everything imaginable and proudly describes her course as one that uses all of the latest "bells and whistles." There is a heavy reliance on graphics and audio. While it looks "cool," the students seem to get lost in the links, have trouble downloading so many graphics with slow telephone modem connections, and complain of information overload. On the other hand, they are greatly pleased that they no longer have to come to class three days a week. They also are enamored by the "glitz" of the course and the entertainment value it provides. They view it as an improvement over dry lectures. They figure that the quirks need to be tolerated because it is the initial offering of this course online. In their gratitude, they offer very positive remarks on course evaluation forms in an attempt to encourage her to offer more.

Some Questions to Consider

- What values are important in determining the appropriateness of a distance learning initiative?
- Should the quality of learning outcomes be the sole factor in measuring the appropriateness of an online course?
- What responsibilities does the professor have in crafting a course (or redesigning one) for a distance system? Is a professor's enthusiasm for technology sufficient reason to offer a distance course?
- To what extent is the professor "using" the students as guinea pigs? Is this justifiable for any reason? Have students been "harmed" in any way by this experience?
- Does it matter that the professor is working on a promotion portfolio and she wants to demonstrate that she has innovative teaching strategies and/or has been in the forefront of her school's efforts to use technology in teaching?
- What responsibilities do the *institution* and the *students* have in this case?
- What role does evaluation/assessment play in this case?
- What are the potential *negative* and *positive* consequences in this case? To whom might they accrue?
- To what extent is student/faculty convenience a sufficient motive to create online courses?
- What factors should be considered when creating a course that is technologically delivered or supported? Why?

CASE #3

Ellen is an Assistant Professor of Communication. She creates an online course with little, if any support from the university. She does this because she understands that this is a new venture for the university and that they are looking for pioneers to test out the arena and blaze a trail for others if it appears profitable. Ellen crafts three marvelous learning experiences for students and receives high acclaim for these courses. Unfortunately, she has spent so much time on design efforts and on subsequent revisions that her primary research efforts have suffered. The university does not value the scholarship of teaching and subsequently she is denied tenure and promotion. Ellen finds a new academic job with a small teaching college that values excellence and innovation in teaching. Much to her surprise and dismay, she is told that she may not have access to her web-based courses that have been housed on the university's server. She discovers that they adopted an intellectual property policy that states that the courses are the sole property of the university. They remind Ellen that she used university time and resources to produce these courses even if they did not contract with her directly to produce them. In effect, they suggest the ownership of the courses is akin to the ownership of a patent that resides with the organization. To add to her dismay, she discovers the university intends to have Ellen's replacement teach these courses as designed and use teaching assistants to allow multiple section coverage.

Some Questions to Consider

- What are the negative consequences that occur in this case because there was no pre-existing intellectual property rights policy? What *other* consequences might accrue in the absence of such a policy or when the policy is poorly formulated?

- How is courseware similar to and/or different from products often covered under university policy statements? To what extent should courseware belong to a faculty member, the university or college?

- On whose time were these products produced? Did the faculty receive support in the form of release time, financial compensation, or staff assistance from Instruction Technology designers? Do any of these things matter? Why? Why not?

- Under what circumstances, if any, should courseware be distributed to new faculty so they may teach an existing course when the creator is on sabbatical, no longer wishes to teach the course, or leaves the institution?

- What *rights* and whose rights need to be protected? Faculty? The Institution? How might faculty members protect their intellectual property *before* a policy is written?

- What are the rights of the *new* institution that just hired this faculty member to teach similar courses for them? Should they support her claims for portability of "her" courseware so that it can be offered to their students?

- What should be included in an ethically defensible intellectual property rights policy? What values should guide the framing of such a statement? What contingency factors should be included? Who is responsible for creating such a document and who should be involved?

CASE #4

Tina is a nontraditional, part-time student who lives on a farm in rural Ohio. Steadily she has been pursuing her degree in forensic sociology at the nearest educational institution for several years. She needs three years to finish her remaining 36 credit hours in the major. Due to declining on-campus enrollment, the institution announces that they are converting the program in which Tina is enrolled to an online or on-campus-option for one year, and then solely to an online option at the beginning of the second year. Privately they admit that profit and market demand, rather than enhanced educational value are the driving forces behind this decision. They tell Tina she will no longer have to drive the 64 miles to campus for classes and she should be happy that they are making this degree more accessible to her. Tina does not view it as *more accessible*, because of her high technology apprehension, a seriously outdated computer, and the lack of *high speed* Internet access available to her. She has greatly valued the personal attention she has received from her on-campus professors and the positive impact the social interaction has had on her shyness and self-esteem. Tina's has an auditory learning style. She is worried that this online program will not meet her needs and she perceives the credibility of a diploma from an online program to be suspect. Finally, Tina does not perceive any transfer options because the next closest institution in 150 miles away and it does not offer her major?

Some Questions to Consider

- What are the ethical implications of the institution's decision to convert this course to an online format only? To what extent are profit and market demand sufficient justifications for converting this program? To what extent should predictions about the educational value of the program enter into such decisions?
- What does the institution owe the student in this case? Has there been any breach of implied agreements with Tina?
- To what extent is this decision discriminatory? Fair?
- To what extent might this decision "do harm" to some and "do good" to others? How should these be balanced? Is the utilitarian concept of the greatest good for the greatest number sufficient in this case?
- What rights does Tina have? Tow what extent have they been violated? To what extent, and under what circumstances can they be violated?
- What rights does the *institution* have in this case? What are their responsibilities? To what extent must they adjust their programming to the market? Why?
- What consequences (positive and negative) will likely result in this case?
- What values should guide the decision-making in this case? What contingencies should be examined when determining the right/ethical course of action for the institution and for Tina?

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Moral Leadership and the Role of the Adult Educator

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Goal.
During the session, we will discuss what moral leadership involves for the educator of adult students, what some of the institutional pitfalls are, and recommendations on an approach to moral leadership.

I. Prelude.

This has been a difficult paper to think through and to write and even now the paper seems pregnant. What I am proposing in my session and in this paper is an account of the role of the adult educator whose focus is intellectual and social awareness rather than marketplace demands. This account views the role of the adult educator as a guide for learning and as a moral leader and that what we teach must focus on the internal development of the individual and human flourishing, rather than seeing our task as one of preparing students for the workforce. A leader's moral duty expresses itself not only in the obvious day-to-day ethical dilemmas, but in the institutional policies and structures that may have hidden implications (Lashway, 1) One of the difficulties is that those who view "education" in the sense of training students for a career have borrowed the language of those who see education as more than job preparation and degree completion. Learner-centered now means what the students need for their job and couple that idea with the concept of anytime-anyplace learning, we end up with educational institutions whose goal is to supply degree certified workers rather than producers of people who have a critical consciousness, sufficiently well-informed and socially aware to be citizens of a global community; we have, according to Nel Noddings, professor of Philosophy and Education at Teacher's College, Columbia University, largely ignored massive social changes in our schools. The modern university is more and more a kept university which focuses on developing a market model curriculum (Cunningham) than in truly educating. In this essay as well as in the interactive presentation, I will show that the solution to the problem of the commercialization of higher education is an emphasis on moral leadership which involves a caring for learning and for people rather than learning as a market productivity goal. It requires a return to the understanding of learner-center as what is best for the learner's internal flourishing.

Proposition One. Good leaders focus on doing the right thing, not on doing things right or efficiently.

II. Where we are.

Iris Murdoch in Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals, believes that the charm and power of technology and the authority of a scientific world view hide the speed with which the idea of the responsible moral individual is being diminished. The foundation of any culture lies in the way it answers the question how best should I live. For some cultures the answer has been by believing in god(s); for others it has been upholding tradition, still others see nature as the answer. In our culture, the answer is clear: being in the world means being a consumer; power lies in the external world of things. The noted educator and activist, Paulo Freire, saw education as a way to improve our inner selves, and in turn to potentially improve our physical environment, but educators seem to have forgotten the former and have focused almost solely on the latter. The dehumanization of our students occurs when educators focus on the external (economic) needs and when our students are taught that having a better life is best realized through consumption. When we focus our advertising on the momentary rewards of education or the speed in which we can achieve our degree, we fail as moral institutions and as moral leaders. The concepts of speed and technology have become so entrenched within the institution of education, especially adult higher education, that acceleration, productivity, efficiency, becomes the moral values which educators affirm over those of self-reflection, integrity, care, etc. According to Parker Palmer, a senior associate of the American Association for Higher Education, in a culture of technique, we often confuse leadership with power, but the two are not the same (32). Power works from the outside in, but leadership must work from the inside out. This is why it is important we concentrate on the internal development of our students. Once colleges become mostly receptacles where a market society goes to refresh its workforce, moral leadership becomes more difficult. Educators are forced to create a particular kind of student and students understand that one size must fit all. The lowest level of moral leadership is that of teaching or being a follower. Yet the goal of creating moral followers, while an immense benefit to well-run society, confuses leadership with authority.

We are mistaken when we seek being seen as a leader outside ourselves, in sources ranging from a concern with pedagogy, classroom management skills, keeping students satisfied and happy, or with seeking "leadership" through popularity. Moral and ethical leadership is leading students out of Plato's Cave, not further chaining them to its walls. Creative and critical thought coupled with a caring attitude is the way which we can begin to climb out of the chasm and this ability to climb out is leadership. The chasm is not an economic one, but a moral and spiritual one which higher education fails to deal with. For the most part, we have left out of our educational processes social responsibility and the appreciation of intellectual contemplation and instead concentrated our resources on serving the market. Freire criticizes a certain concept of education (62 - 64) since it leads not to communication and reflection, but only to moral following or what he calls, oppression. Real education cannot neglect questions central to human life, yet a market approach, does just that. The primary problem for educators is how to create moral leaders - in their reasoning, their motives, and their behaviors. So, what is to be done?

Proposition Two: We must learn to live not learn to earn (Cunningham)

III. Teach us to Care.

As our understanding of education continues to move from learning to training, questions like How should I live?, How do I find meaning in my life? What kind of life is worth living? Is there a God? What is my place in the universe? etc. are no longer discussed in any meaningful sense but they are question that should be explored in true education. As educators, we have a responsibility to lead our students to these questions. Nontraditional students often return to school because of an experience that puts them on the margins of life - a divorce, the failure of a career, the death of a spouse, being constantly passed over for promotions, and a whole list of other reasons. As adult educators we think of them as more expressive and self-confident than the traditional age student but perhaps their years have merely given them more practice at keeping their fears tucked away (Palmer, 45). The failure of educators to address these fears and concerns show a lack of leadership in the classroom and by administrators. Addressing these existential fears is part of our responsibility as educators and most of us, as Cunningham maintains, are only offering tools for earning, rather than tools for living. The sort of knowledge that relates subject matter and teaching itself to the great questions of life seems to have fallen into an educational black hole. How are we as adult educators currently answering these questions about life, it's simple, what gives life meaning - economic security and marketplace values.

Educators, as well as the general population, are currently keen on community building. Whether we call it collaborative learning, cohorts, or one of a host of other terms, one of the functions of a community, including learning communities, should be to engage in moral education and leadership. According to Nel Noddings, a fundamental premise of traditional education has been that every teacher should be a teacher of morals and, second, that every teacher is – willingly or not -- a teacher of morals. Teachers – even when they deny that they do so – transmit something of moral value and since this transmission is inevitable, we should seek to do a responsible job of it. Doing a responsible job of it is where being a leader in one's community comes into play.

If we are to demonstrate leadership and community building in our teaching, must we then adopt a particular viewpoint or program? While some argue that character education is best and others see cognitive developmentalism as better, there is a third alternative. This alternative is where we must concentrate on establishing conditions which support human flourishing. It is where one enters into the peaceful battleground of dialectics. One way to do this is to use stories and personal reflection to invite discussion and contemplation. These stories can be from the lives of the students, maybe in terms of moral dilemmas, or they can be drawn from literature or history. The dialogues of Plato or the fiction of Toni Morrison or Albert Camus require students to reflect on what moral leadership is and what it means to be a moral leader. One of the better methods I use is to ask students to write about a moral dilemma they are having or have had in their lives and then assess this dilemma in terms of moral reasoning guidelines I wrote. Other times I use short stories written by others. For example, E. A. Abbott's Flatland (1952) is a science fiction story which introduces concepts of dimensionality and relativity (great for science/math classes) but also ideas like sexism, classism, and mysticism which work well in liberal arts classes (Noddings, 71).

Stories like Flatland, personal narratives, or even philosophical arguments, not only help to build community in the classroom through shared ideas and conversation, but they also provide an opportunity to criticize community and the ideas of others (Noddings, 72). The ability to assess and then accept or reject aspects of one's critique is a sign of a moral leader. Discussion of issues which arrive in the lives of the students and in stories by others, is vital if we are to avoid the pitfalls of a community which can be isolated from important values. We must learn to talk about the role of conversation in all its forms. That is, we could discuss how to demonstrate moral behavior in our teaching and how to provide students with opportunities to care for one another, and, as importantly, how to converse with past authors.

The dialectical methods of teaching and caring, cannot be achieved in poorly planned accelerated formats or in situations where the goals focus on degree completion rather than deepening our understanding of who we are as people; substituting speed for depth can, at best, only train an individual, it cannot educate. Slow is the experience of all deep wells, says Nietzsche, long must they to wait until they know what hath fallen into their depths (Zarathustra, 165) and his thinking seems apropos here. Thinking through problems, truly educating ourselves, both require depth, slowness, and dialogue. Only dialogue, which requires critical thinking, is also capable of generating critical thinking. "Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education." (Freire, 81) Freire insight is that dialectical teaching forces us to listen, respond, and improvise, and thus we are more likely to hear something unexpected and insightful from not only ourselves, but from our students (Palmer, 24). Moral leadership in the classroom and within ourselves must allow time for reflection, depth, and the engagement of dialogical communication. Moral leadership requires that we care for others and for ourselves, but the caring for must also involve a caring about. What teachers or students who want to be moral leaders should care about is flourishing of the self, not the idols of the marketplace. For us to be leaders in this complex world we need to be able to work with a diverse group of people and have knowledge of a diverse group of ideas. Our students have to be able to handle challenges that come up and the need to understand the context in which they live and the differences around the world. Institutions and educators who see higher education as only preparation for the workplace, are doing a disservice to the community in which they find themselves and to their students; they are, in fact, demonstrating immoral leadership.

In the education of caring there is something we need to learn now to do and care about, but there is also something we need to learn not to do. And what we learn not to do is as important as what we learn to do. What are the things we should care and not care about?

Teach us Not to Care.

1. Speed Kills. Moral leadership requires goals that promote sustained reflection, social awareness, and depth in learning. Acceleration only blurs the learning landscape.

2. Learner-centered is not self-centered. Moral leadership gives students what they need to live creative and critical lives as well as how to be socially aware citizens, not what will make them feel better about themselves in the short term or more employable.

3. Anytime Anyplace thinking lacks insight. Moral leadership requires educators to instill in students a depth of understanding and an accumulation of content that cannot be achieved quickly. Anytime-Anyplace learning is an excuse for poor planning and money-laundering.

Teach us to Care.

1. Leaders examine dilemmas from different perspective. Vincent Ruggiero describes three. One is to know to whom we are *obligated*, not just locally, but globally. Another perspective is to identify and anticipate the *consequences* of each choice. Finally, we must understand what *values* are involved in our beliefs and actions.

2. Leaders have the habit of ethical reflection.

3. Leaders help students to be able to critique their world. They encourage them to be knowledge makers, not information consumers by helping them appreciate the life of the mind.

4. Leaders teach students that caring requires intellectual competence

5. Leaders are clear and unapologetic about their goal. The main aim of education should be to
produce intellectually competent and caring people whose focus is social awareness and critical consciousness.

Suffer us not to mock ourselves with falsehood
Teach us to care, and not to care.
Teach us to sit still.
Even among these rocks. (T.S. Elliott)

The words of Elliott offer a nice conclusion. We must sit for a moment and ask ourselves how best to create in our students a sense of wonder and awe that enables them to reflect upon the creative, spiritual, and intellectual aspects of human flourishing. The two most important values which we as educators must concentrate on is that of *caring for* others and *caring about* quality learning. Very few will disagree in word, but in terms of action, adult higher education, and even higher education in general, has recently offered little in the way of valuable leadership. I tried to show why moral leadership is lacking and then called for a re-visioning of who we are and what we are doing as leaders in education. Our goal is a revolutionary one: to recover the depth and health of liberal learning without succumbing to the idols of the marketplace. To do otherwise is to only mock ourselves as teachers and learners.

Proposition Three: To educate is to guide students on an inner journey toward more truthful and deeper ways of understanding and relating to the world and to its history

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SECTION III

Instructional Technology and Leadership Track

Pedagogy, Technology and Learning Styles—Their Effect on the Online Learner

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Introduction

Universities across the country find themselves in competition for students and revenue. On the surface, this situation is no different than it has been for decades, what has changed is the multitude of delivery options that students may now choose as they consider their educational choices. There is no doubt that online course delivery has become a popular option for universities and students. The question becomes—is online education viable and how should courses be designed so that they meet the pedagogical needs of students and faculty. These concerns provide the focus of this research project which investigates student learning styles in an online education environment.

This research project began in the summer of 2000 when a grade comparison of the final average grades for a traditional course was compared to those of its online companion. The result of this comparison showed that the online students performed 14% better overall than their traditional student counterparts. Why? It is the answer to this question and many others that has led to the continuation of this research project. In addition, this research will address several variables which the study asserts appear to contribute to the success or failure of students taking part in online learning.

Problem Area

Online education represents a significant departure from traditional educational models. It also takes course delivery out of the realm of technological "enhancement". As Cladieux and Swail (1999) have argued, educational technologies that have been introduced over the last 100 years served to "supplement rather than supplant" traditional instructional models. Online education is quickly becoming a singular approach to education in and of itself.

Providing courses in an online format is changing the way instructors teach and students learn. Educators are beginning to investigate creative options to providing course material online in a way that provides equal or better student learning outcomes. Institutions who provide online education are having to move beyond traditional educational models. One of the primary differences appears to be found in where focus radiates from. Typically online education takes on a more student centered approach than traditional methods. This approach is seen by many as being revolutionary, the power lying in the direction toward student needs and desires. William (1992) argues that

> The most advanced distance education program can provide students with far greater involvement in the process of learning and allow them the exercise of far

> greater control over that process than is possible in many traditional learning environments (p. 10)

Another set of arguments, presented by Freire (1997) suggest that instructors of online courses must learn to adjust to student's perspectives and design materials appropriately. In developing understanding of students—instructors in turn—learn to teach from multiple perspectives. Based on Freire's arguments, online classes would allow for more flexibility as opposed to a completely pre-structured course. This shifts some of the focus to student goals and perspectives. Instructors become, in a sense, guides—allowing students to solve problems themselves using their own understanding and perspectives.

There is little doubt that online education differs substantial from traditional education. The primary difference is structural, but structure and form go hand-in-hand leading to pedagogical differences that are just beginning to be explored. Online courses can be liberating in a way that traditional courses are not as students are typically free to pursue materials and assignments at their own pace within the online format. This tends to free the students from time constraints and classroom confines. This also serves to reduce traditional barriers which have proven oppressive or problematic from many students perspectives. An online environment takes the place of a physical classroom space effectively moving the students from structural confines to a more fluid virtual atmosphere.

One of the differences in the virtual environment which appears to significantly enhance a student's learning experience is the availability of electronic resources. It is argued by McDonald that access to electronic publications has a "leveling effect" by providing equal access to "specialized resources".(2000, p. 132) From a number of perspectives this kind of access is in and of itself, liberating. Students who have experienced difficulties with communication and anxiety in the traditional classroom setting often feel more free to express themselves in a virtual environment. Likewise, students who have been unable to engage in common dialogue in the past are more likely to engage in discussions online.

Online education allows many students to excel in ways that traditional education does not. Due to the self paced environment and student centered atmosphere—individuals can take more control of their education. In many cases it appears more personalized. According to Gillani (2000), online instructors are better able to design courses which focus on student's needs and are more custom tailored to the individual.

Theory

This research grounds itself in Knowles theory of *andragogy* which best describes the disposition of the online learner. This theory is primarily based on five assumptions regarding the adult learner, which include(Merriam, 1999):

1. As a person matures, they become more self-directing.
2. Adults' life-experience is a rich resource for learning.
3. An adult's readiness to learn is closely related to the developmental tasks of his or her social role.
4. Adults are more problem-centered in learning rather than subject-centered.
5. Adults are motivated to learn by internal factors rather than external ones.

These assumptions are incorporated in the design and implementation of online courses for adults at the University of La Verne. Therefore, these online courses promote self-directed, experiential learning and assume the learner is highly motivated and self-disciplined.

Students may possess all of above mentioned traits, but it has been proven that everyone learns differently (Kolb, 1999). In other words, people have different learning styles. "James and Blank define *learning style* as the complex manner in which, and conditions under which, learners most efficiently and most effectively perceive, process, store and recall what they are attempting to learn" (Merriam, 1999). This is not to be confused with *cognitive style* which is described as "how individuals receive and process information" (Merriam, 1999). Learning styles not only have to do with how individuals learn, but also what type of learning environment best suits their style.
Therefore, this research study is not only concerned with student outcomes, but it also considers the following additional variables:

- Student learning style
- Student perceptions upon entering an online course
- Technological skills
- Design of the online course
- Instructor learning style

Research Questions

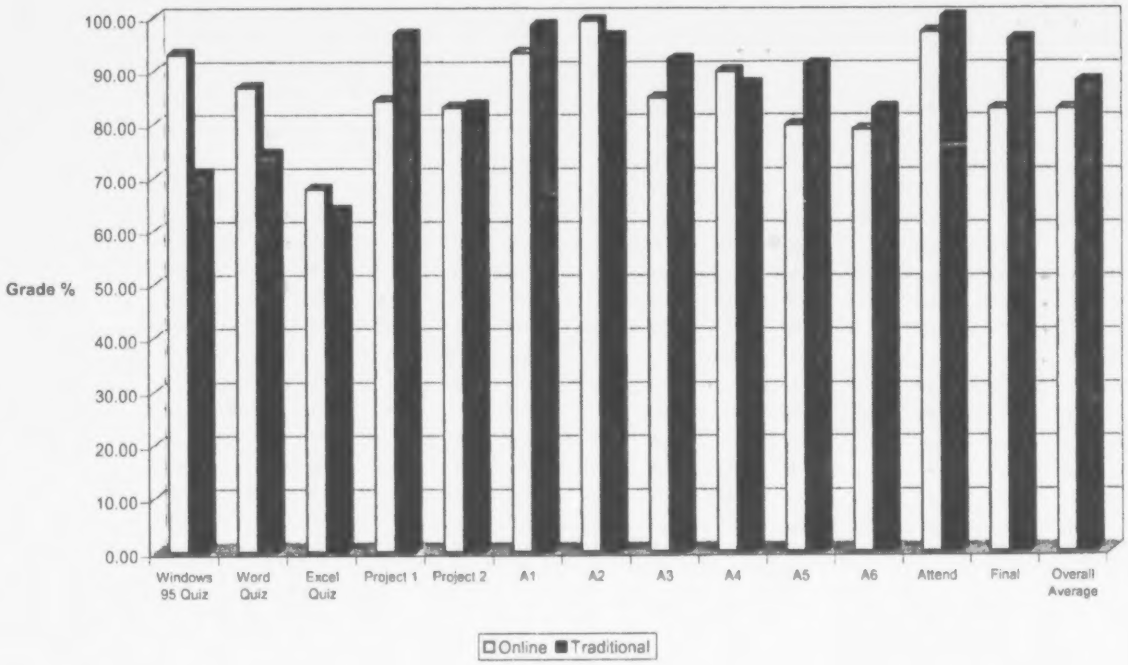
For the data collection period during the summer of 2002, we limited our research to the following questions:

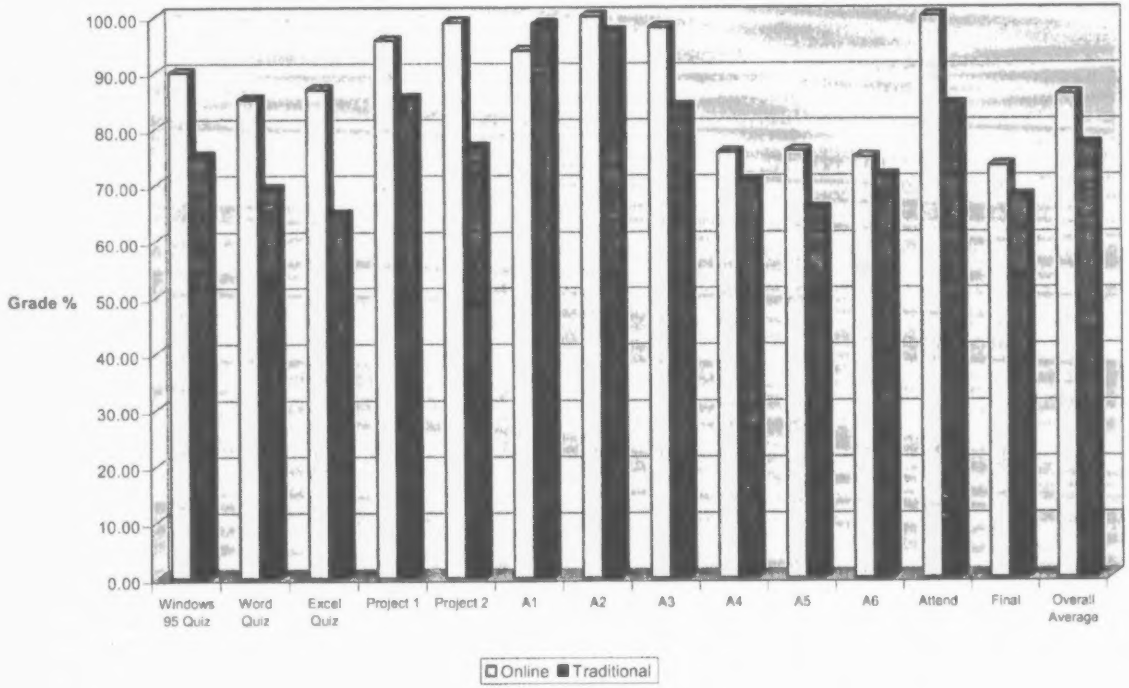
1. What are the typical learning styles that self-selected online students display?
2. Did any of the measured variables contribute to a student's success in the online course (perceptions, technological skills, design of the course)?
3. Is there are culture that develops in online programs and if so, how is productivity impacted?

Results of Past Research

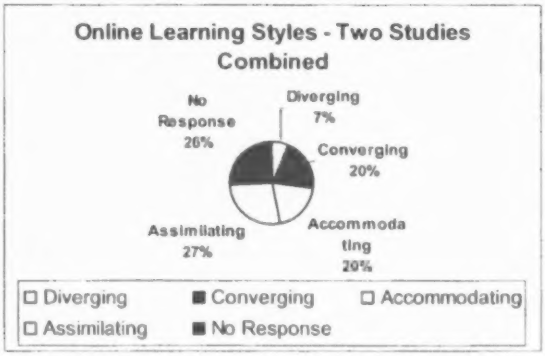
Originally, this study was performed at Carlow College in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. A comparison was made between an online section of IM 101, an introductory computer applications course, and a traditional section of the same course. The same instructor taught both sections of the course and the exact curriculum was used in each, including the identical assessments. The students were administered a Learning Styles Inventory (Kolb,1999) and asked to complete a technology survey. This study was conducted both in the Spring and Summer semesters of 2001. Following are the results of these two studies (the data breakdown may be found in Appendix A):

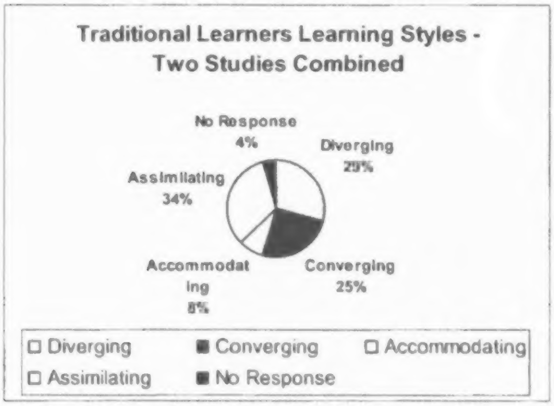
First Study - Online VS. Tradtional Grade Comparision





Second Study - Online VS Traditional Grade Comparision


Online Learning Styles - Two Studies Combined
No Response 26%
Diverging 7%
Converging 20%
Accommodating 20%
Assimilating 27%
☐ Diverging
■ Converging
☐ Accommodating
☐ Assimilating
■ No Response


Traditional Learners Learning Styles - Two Studies Combined
No Response 4%
Diverging 29%
Assimilating 34%
Accommodating 8%
Converging 25%
☐ Diverging
■ Converging
☐ Accommodating
☐ Assimilating
■ No Response

The conclusions drawn from this research are as follows:

Performance on Assessments

In the first study, the online students out-performed the traditional students on 5 out of 13 assessments or 38.5% of the time. The overall result being that the traditional students did 3.68% better in the course than the online students. Part of this difference is due to one online student that did not turn in three assignments, resulting in a zero. In the second study, the online students out-performed the traditional students in 12 out of 13 assessments or 92% of the time. The overall result showed an 8.93% difference between the online students overall grade average and the traditional students overall grade average.

Learning Styles

By combining the data collected in both studies regarding learning styles, a slight trend is emerging. The two most popular learning styles among the online learners are Assimilating and a tie between Converging and Accommodating. There were very few Divergers in the online group. However, the Divergers made up 29% of the traditional group. There was no correlation between a particular learning style and the final course grades.

Procedures for Current Research Study

The current study took place during the Summer of 2002 at the University of La Verne in La Verne California. The study focused on students that recently entered the online Bachelor's of Public Administration program and were new to the online learning realm. The sample consisted of eighteen students, three male and fifteen female, and each student was asked to complete the following:
Prior to the course:

- Online perception survey (See Appendix B)
- Online technology survey (See Appendix C)
- Kolb's Learning Styles Inventory

Upon completion of the course, students' time spent in the course chat and discussion board features were evaluated and given a score of low, medium or high. In addition, their overall course grade was evaluated and compared to their participation in the chat and discussion board features along with their comfort level with technology and perceptions about the rigor of an online course. In addition, the faculty member's learning style was evaluated along with the pedagogy of the course.

Study Analysis

The return rate for student LSI's was extremely low, only 28% of the instruments sent out were returned. Of that 28%, 60% (3) were Divergers. This is an interesting outcome since the previous studies indicated that more Diverges self-selected into the traditional classroom environment. Future research will track the majors of students in an attempt to discover any correlation between chosen program of study and learning style.

In analyzing the final grades and comparing them to perceptions, of those students that earned a final grade of A- or better (56% of the population), 80% perceived that they would spend 30 hours or more in preparation for class each week. However, 50% of those "top" students perceived that an online course would be *less difficult* than a traditional course and 40% of them were not anxious about the overall course.

The data also showed a direct correlation between time spent online and final grades. Those students that earned a final grade of A- or better (56% of the population), 90 % of them spent a high amount of time attending chat sessions and 10% spent a medium amount of time in chat. Also, 80% of them spent a high amount of time reading/responding to discussion postings while 20% spend a medium amount of time. The students that earned a B+ or lower grade spent a medium to low amount of time in both the chat room and reading/responding to discussion postings.

The technology survey resulted in 44% of the sample expressing that they were extremely comfortable with computer technology and 50% claiming they were comfortable with computer technology. Only 5% (1 student) was not comfortable with computer technology. An interesting note is that the three students with the *Diverger* learning style were *extremely comfortable* with computer technology.

The additional noteworthy responses from the perceptions survey were:

- 89% are taking the online program because it fits their schedule
- 61% feel online programs provide the same educational opportunities as traditional classroom programs
- 72% feel they learn just as much in an online course as compared to a traditional course.

Finally, the faculty that instructed this course possesses a mix of a Converger/Assimilator learning style. The course pedagogy provided multiple options for students to engage in the course material. Students were required to use discussion boards which were available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They were asked to engage in a minimum number of virtual chat sessions which were scheduled in advance and ran for specific periods of "real-time". It should be noted that students received partial credit for signing on and "lurking" in the chat room. Only 3 students did not "chat" in this environment. In addition to the dialogue options students were also required to turn in essays and lead discussions. A significant portion of the grade was based on interaction in the form of student to student dialog.

The purpose of the course design was to allow the student multiple options for learning, interaction, and discourse. Students were encouraged to express themselves in any way they chose within the context of the course. Ground rules were provided for communication, and argument. Significant time was spent on introductions and sharing of backgrounds, understanding, fears, and values. The instructor worked hard to develop a sense of trust between the students and herself. Students were encouraged to set their own pace within the time constraints of the course. This approach allowed the students some leeway to shape their own learning while achieving the ultimate objectives of the course.

Conclusion

This research study represents a preliminary investigation of the learning styles of online students as well as an exploration of how online courses might best meet students educational needs. The findings show that there are many questions to be answered with regard to designing online courses to meet the needs of multiple learning styles. It appears that no one particular type of learning style is to be found in the ranks of "virtual" students. In addition, the nature of online education appeals to people from a myriad of backgrounds, skills, and styles. It is this factor that makes a study like this so important. If students do not self select based on their own personal learning modalities...if convenience overshadows learning style...then it is doubly important that the course itself be designed to meet the needs of as many learning styles as possible.

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APPENDIX A
Data from Previous Studies

First Study

Overall Grade Averages - Online Students

	Windows 95 Quiz	Word Quiz	Excel Quiz	Project 1	Project 2	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	Attend	Final	Overall Average
Online	93.14	86.86	67.86	84.29	83.00	93.29	99.29	84.86	69.86	79.71	78.86	97.14	82.71	82.71

Overall Grade Averages - Traditional Students

	Windows 95 Quiz	Word Quiz	Excel Quiz	Project 1	Project 2	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	Attend	Final	Overall Average
Traditional	70.80	74.40	63.80	96.80	83.47	98.47	96.33	92.07	87.47	91.13	82.87	100.00	95.80	87.95

Second Study

Overall Grade Averages - Online Students

	Windows 95 Quiz	Word Quiz	Excel Quiz	Project 1	Project 2	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	Attend	Final	Overall Average
Online	90.00	85.20	86.95	95.75	98.99	93.91	100.00	98.06	75.68	75.95	74.79	100.00	73.23	85.93

Overall Grade Averages - Traditional Students

	Windows 95 Quiz	Word Quiz	Excel Quiz	Project 1	Project 2	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	Attend	Final	Overall Average
Traditional	75.11	69.22	64.67	85.33	76.67	98.67	97.33	63.78	70.56	65.56	71.44	84.11	67.78	77.00

APPENDIX B
Online Perception Survey

1. Please fill out the following information.

First Name

Last Name

Sex ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. Prior to taking online coursework, please rate your level of anxiety about taking a course in the online environment.

☐ 5-Extremely Anxious
☐ 4-Somewhat Anxious
☐ 3-Anxious
☐ 2-Not Anxious
☐ 1-Completely Calm

3. Please rate your level of anxiety with regards to general use of the technology (hardware or software).

☐ 5-Extremely Anxious
☐ 4-Somewhat Anxious
☐ 3-Anxious
☐ 2-Not Anxious
☐ 1-Completely Calm

4. Please rate your level of anxiety with regard to interactions with your online professor.

☐ 5-Extremely Anxious
☐ 4-Somewhat Anxious
☐ 3-Anxious
☐ 2-Not Anxious
☐ 1-Completely Calm

5. Please rate your level of anxiety with regard to interactions with other online students.

   ☑ 5-Extremely Anxious
   ☐ 4-Somewhat Anxious
   ☐ 3-Anxious
   ☐ 2-Not Anxious
   ☐ 1-Completely Calm

6. Please rate your level of anxiety with regard to using the virtual chat.

   ☑ 5-Extremely Anxious
   ☐ 4-Somewhat Anxious
   ☐ 3-Anxious
   ☐ 2-Not Anxious
   ☐ 1-Completely Calm

7. Please rate your level of anxiety with regard to using the discussion forums.

   ☑ 5-Extremely Anxious
   ☐ 4-Somewhat Anxious
   ☐ 3-Anxious
   ☐ 2-Not Anxious
   ☐ 1-Completely Calm

8. Please rate your level of anxiety with regard to submitting assignments electronically.

   ☑ 5-Extremely Anxious
   ☐ 4-Somewhat Anxious
   ☐ 3-Anxious
   ☐ 2-Not Anxious
   ☐ 1-Completely Calm

9. Please rate your level of anxiety regarding online course content.

- ☑ 5-Extremely Anxious
- ☐ 4-Somewhat Anxious
- ☐ 3-Anxious
- ☐ 2-Not Anxious
- ☐ 1-Completely Calm

10. Please rate what you perceive to be the level of difficulty of online courses compared to traditional classroom courses.

- ☑ 5-Much more difficult
- ☐ 4-More difficult
- ☐ 3-The same level of difficulty
- ☐ 2-Less difficult
- ☐ 1-Much easier

11. Select any of the following statements that apply to your perception of online coursework:

- ☐ Online courses are easier than traditional classes.
- ☐ Online courses are more difficult than traditional classes.
- ☐ Online courses are more time consuming than traditional classes.
- ☐ Online courses are less time consuming than those in the classroom.
- ☐ Online courses are complex.
- ☐ Online courses fit into my schedule.
- ☐ Online classes do not provide the same educational opportunities as traditional classes.
- ☐ Online classes provide the same or similar educational opportunities as traditional classes.
- ☐ I will learn less in an online class.
- ☐ I will learn more in an online class.
- ☐ I will learn just as much in an online course as in the classroom.
- ☐ I will interact more in an online class than in a traditional class setting.
- ☐ I will interact less in an online class than in a traditional setting.

12. Why did you decide to take online courses?

13. How would you rate your level of participation in a traditional classroom setting?

- ☒ 5-I participate all of the time.
- ☐ 4-I participate on a regular basis
- ☐ 3-I participate intermittently
- ☐ 2-I rarely participate in the classroom
- ☐ 1-I never participate in the classroom

14. Please rate your level of interaction with other individuals in a traditional classroom setting.

- ☒ 5-I interact with others in my classes all of the time.
- ☐ 4-I interact with others in my classes on a regular basis
- ☐ 3-I sometimes interact with others in my classes
- ☐ 2-I rarely interact with others in my classes
- ☐ 1-I never interact with others in my classes

15. How often do you think you will need to get online to complete your online course successfully.

- ☒ 5-Every day
- ☐ 4-Three to Five times a week
- ☐ 3-Once or twice a week
- ☐ 2-Once every couple of weeks
- ☐ 1-A couple of times over the 10 week term

How many hours do you think you will need to spend online to complete a course successfully?

- ☑ 5-Over 40 hours
- ☐ 4-30-40 hours
- ☐ 3-20-30 hours
- ☐ 2-10-20 hours
- ☐ 1-less than 10 hours

16. How much prep time do you think will be needed to complete your online course successfully? (ie. research, reading, writing etc.)

- ☑ 5-30-40 hours
- ☐ 4-20-30 hours
- ☐ 3-10-20 hours
- ☐ 2-less than 10 hours
- ☐ 1-no time at all

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APPENDIX C
Technology Survey

What kind of computer do you use at home?

☑ Apple/MAC
☐ IBM or Compatible
☐ No Computer at home

What kind of computer do you use at work?

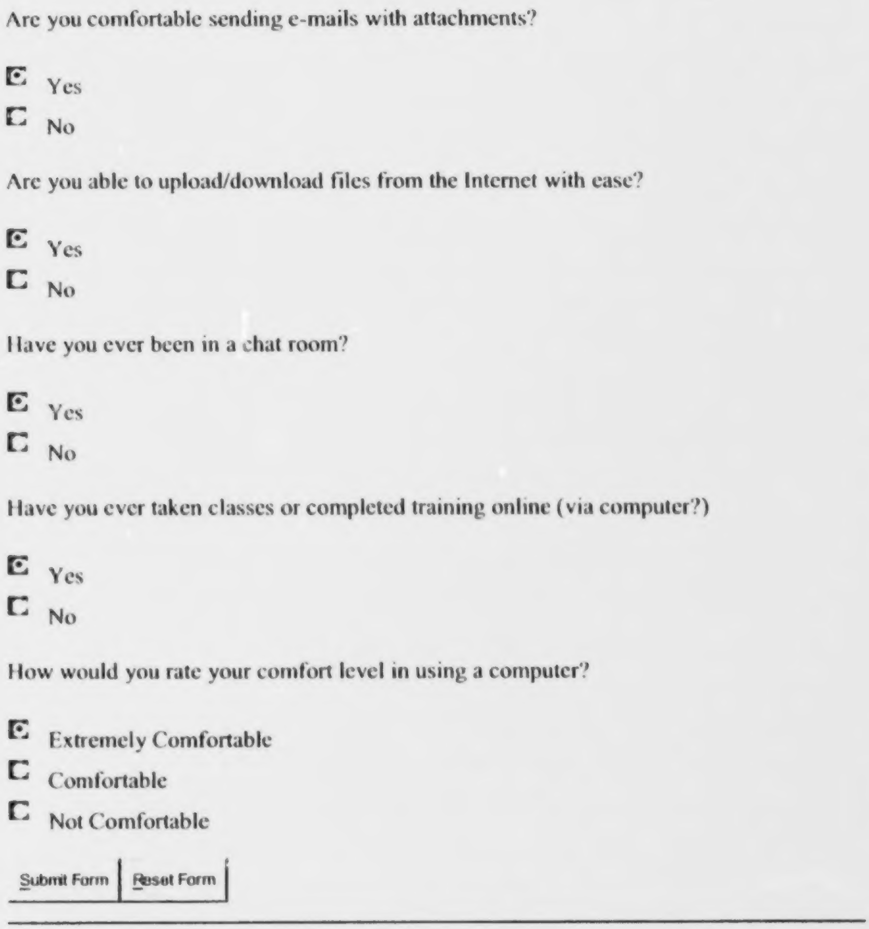
☑ Apple/MAC
☐ IBM or Compatible
☐ No computer at work

What software programs have ou had experience with? (if any)

Do you have a connection to the Internet? If so, with what provider? (Example: AOL)

Do you use e-mail regularly?

☑ Yes
☐ No



Are you comfortable sending e-mails with attachments?

● Yes
○ No

Are you able to upload/download files from the Internet with ease?

● Yes
○ No

Have you ever been in a chat room?

● Yes
○ No

Have you ever taken classes or completed training online (via computer?)

● Yes
○ No

How would you rate your comfort level in using a computer?

● Extremely Comfortable
○ Comfortable
○ Not Comfortable

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A Mentoring Program for New Associate Faculty Members of the School of Professional Studies at Eastern University

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to present for discussion a mentoring program that I developed for the associate faculty (Eastern University's term for adjunct faculty) teaching in the School of Professional Studies (SPS) at Eastern University. In the course of developing this program, I learned that while many institutions have mentoring programs for their full time faculty, relatively few have mentoring programs for adjunct and part time faculty. Given the increased use of adjunct faculty in higher education, it seemed to me that mentoring might be an effective way to provide support, guidance, and training for adjunct faculty as they begin their teaching experience. I present this paper in hopes of prompting discussion on the ways we as institutions can serve our adjunct faculty members more effectively.

Currently, I serve as one of thirteen full time faculty members of SPS. This mentoring proposal was developed as a result of a practicum I wrote for my doctoral studies at Nova Southeastern University. In addition to conducting an extensive literature review, I received input and feedback from faculty colleagues inside and outside of Eastern University who served on formative and summative committees. So while I take full responsibility for the program presented here, I am indebted to the insights of many trusted colleagues. Finally, I would say that this proposal was developed within the unique culture and structure of the School of Professional Studies and thus may not be entirely transferable to other institutions. However, I believe the criteria used to develop this proposal and the elements of the proposal itself can be illustrative and informative to others.

Background to the Associate Faculty Mentoring Program Proposal

The School of Professional Studies (SPS) is one of five schools that make up the Eastern University, a private, liberal arts, faith-based institution located in the western suburbs of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. SPS is a school dedicated to providing accelerated degree (graduate and undergraduate) programs for working adults. Unlike most traditional eighteen to twenty-two year old college students, the students who participate in the SPS programs work at full time jobs, are often married with children, and are generally active members of the community. As a result, SPS students bring a different set of needs into their college experience than the traditional student.

SPS has thirteen full time faculty members and over 200 associate faculty who teach in three undergraduate and four graduate level degree programs. Classes are offered in 22 locations throughout Southeastern and Central Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C. All seven programs operate on an accelerated, modularized, sequenced format. All faculty are hired to teach individual modules on a course-by-course basis by the SPS Director of Faculty, who is not a faculty member but an administrator.

Associate faculty members are hired through an extensive hiring process. The basic requirements for an associate faculty member include a Master or doctoral level degree and a resume indicating professional experience related to the subjects that will be taught. After submitting an application, prospective faculty members are asked to sign the university's statement of faith and submit a personal statement describing their personal religious beliefs. The Director of Faculty and the Dean of SPS review all these materials and if deemed satisfactory, the candidate is invited to participate in the faculty selection process. On a designated day, usually in the late summer, all faculty candidates attend a large group gathering where they complete a brief essay on their views of adult education. Then a team of administrators, faculty (full time and associate) members, and SPS students interviews each candidate. Following the interview each candidate presents an 8-10 minute instructional segment before the interview team and other faculty candidates. In addition candidates are asked to submit a critique of a student paper provided to them in advance of the interview day. The interview team then makes a recommendation to the Director of Faculty, who upon review of the relevant materials makes a recommendation to the Dean of SPS whether or not to offer the candidate a teaching position. All candidates are sent a letter signed by the Dean either inviting them to become an SPS associate faculty member or indicating that they have not been recommended for hire. Criteria used to evaluate a candidate's fitness to teach include professional expertise, a facilitative teaching style, an ability to articulate Christian faith and commitment, and a commitment to the university's mission and goals.

Once candidates have been selected to serve on the faculty, they are required to attend a daylong orientation workshop. At the workshop new faculty members are given an overview of the mission and purpose of the university, as well as relevant procedures regarding evaluations, submission of grades, and other administrative responsibilities. They are introduced to the Kolb model of experiential learning, which serves as a foundation for all SPS courses. In addition they are led in a workshop of good grading practices and effective classroom facilitation skills. New faculty members are provided with a copy of the Associate Faculty Handbook, and handouts related to the topics discussed. The orientation workshop is conducted by the Director of Faculty and other faculty members invited to help provide leadership. Heretofore, upon completion of the orientation session, new faculty members are scheduled by the Director of Faculty for their first teaching assignment.

The proposed SPS Associate Faculty Mentoring Program (AFMP) arose out of concern to provide additional training and support for new associate faculty as they are beginning their teaching assignments. Under the present structure and process, after new faculty have been hired and gone through the orientation session, the AFMP will occur during their first two teaching assignments.

Criteria Used for the Development of the Mentoring Program

As a preparation for the development of the SPS Associate Faculty Mentoring Program, I conducted an extensive literature review of mentoring in business and educational institutions. This review also included an overview of faculty-to-faculty mentoring programs, as well as a review of the unique challenges faced by adjunct faculty members. I also examined four mentoring faculty programs specifically designed for adjunct faculty members. From this literature review, ten criteria for an effective adjunct faculty mentoring program were identified and are listed below. While not included with this document, the literature review conducted for this study is available upon request at dboyd@eastern.edu.

As a result of that study, I determined that an effective adjunct faculty mentoring program for SPS associate faculty shall…

1. …be conducted with the support and commitment of the SPS Director of Faculty and the Dean of SPS.
2. … have clearly articulated goals and objectives.
3. … designate a specific person to manage, coordinate, and oversee the mentoring program.
4. … have a clearly defined process for the recruitment, selection, and preparation of mentees.
5. … have a clearly defined process for the recruitment and selection of mentors.
6. … have a training process for mentors.
7. … have a clearly defined process for matching mentors and mentees with each other.
8. … set clear parameters and guidelines for the mentoring relationships.
9. … have a clearly defined closure policy, which should include a clear procedure for exiting the program at any time.
10. … have a clearly articulated evaluation process during and after the mentoring experience.

The SPS Associate Faculty Mentoring Program Proposal

Introduction

While looking for ways to strengthen its faculty development process, the Director of SPS Faculty in consultation with the Dean of SPS and several full-time SPS faculty members considered mentoring as a means for providing additional support and guidance to recently hired associate faculty members. As early as 1999, SPS Director of Faculty discussed the development of a mentoring program with the former SPS Director of Curriculum. While several ideas and a list of potential mentors were developed, no specific plan or program was created. As a result of conversations among the SPS full-time faculty, I approached the SPS Director of Faculty about the possibility of developing a mentoring program for new SPS associate faculty. She was receptive to the idea and gave me the notes that had been produced from those earlier discussions. After an extensive literature review, a list of criteria for an effective mentoring program was developed. The purpose of this proposal is to describe the basic content and structure of the mentoring program based on those criteria. The purpose of the mentoring program is provide support and guidance to new associate faculty members as they begin their teaching in SPS programs

Overview

The SPS Associate Faculty Mentoring Program (AFMP) proposed here will involve all newly hired SPS associate faculty during the period of their first two teaching modules. The program will be coordinated a person designated by the SPS Director of Faculty as the AFMP Program Coordinator. Mentors will be selected from among full-time SPS faculty members and experienced associate faculty members, who have undergone mentor training by the Program Coordinator. Mentors and mentees will be matched by the Program Coordinator and where possible, mentees' preferences with regard to mentors will be taken into consideration. Guidelines and parameters for the mentoring relationship will be clearly designated and a closure policy established. Mentors and mentees will evaluate the progress of the program while in the mentoring relationship and after the mentoring relationship is formally ended.

For the purposes of this proposal mentoring will be defined as a process whereby experienced faculty members share their skills and knowledge, provide friendship, feedback, support, and guidance to newly hired associate faculty members for the purpose of enhancing their teaching effectiveness in the programs of SPS. The structured relationship between the mentor and mentee will be called the mentoring relationship or the mentoring partnership; the two terms will be used interchangeably.

Goals of the Program

Associate faculty members are hired because of their academic credentials, professional experience and expertise, awareness of adult learning principles, ability to articulate Christian faith and commitment, and agreement with the mission of Eastern University. However, the extent of teaching experience varies with each individual. Furthermore, most new associate faculty members are only vaguely familiar with the culture and guiding values of Eastern University. The AFMP seeks to address these concerns through the pursuit of the following goals:

1. To provide instruction and feedback in teaching and classroom management skills for new associate faculty members during the teaching of their first two modules in the SPS program.

2. To acclimate new associate faculty members to the culture and administrative procedures of SPS.

3. To facilitate the development of collegial relationships between new and experienced SPS faculty members.

4. To provide professional and spiritual support to new associate faculty members as needed.

5. To make recommendations to the SPS Director of Faculty regarding the readiness of new faculty to teach in SPS programs and courses.

The degree to which these goals have been achieved will be determined by the completion of an evaluation form by both the mentor and mentee, at the end of the mentoring relationship.

Administration of the Program
All activities of the AFMP will be conducted under the auspices of the SPS Director of Faculty. The SPS Director of Faculty shall appoint a person to serve in the position of Program Coordinator. Preferably the Program Coordinator should be a full time faculty member who has had experience being mentored and mentoring others, has taught in SPS programs, is willing to work closely with the Director of Faculty, and who is acquainted with and committed to the mission, policies and procedures of SPS.

The Program Coordinator in conjunction with the SPS Director of Faculty will be responsible for the recruitment, selection, and training of mentors. He or she will also be responsible for introducing the AFMP to new associate faculty members and pairing them with their mentees. Furthermore, he or she will be responsible for oversight of the program and for collecting evaluations as designated below. The Program Coordinator may choose to establish a mentoring program committee to assist in the carrying out of these duties. Compensation for the program director will be determined by the SPS Director of Faculty in consultation with the Dean of SPS.

Selection of Mentees
All newly hired associate faculty members will be required to participate in the AFMP. They will be introduced to the program during the orientation session. The requirement to participate in the AFMP shall be communicated to prospective associate faculty members during the application and selection process. Individuals refusing to participate in the AFMP will not be allowed to teach, except by special permission from the SPS Director of Faculty. Mentees will receive $125 for their participation in the AFMP.

The process for the selection of mentees will be as follows:

1. After going through the faculty selection process, new faculty members will receive a letter from the SPS Director of Faculty inviting them to be an SPS Associate Faculty member. The letter will state that all new faculty are required to attend an orientation session and take part in a mentoring program during the teaching of their first two modules. The letter will further explain that the first module will be team taught with an experienced faculty member serving as their mentor and will be considered part of their initial training.

2. At the orientation session the Program Coordinator will provide new faculty members with an AFMP guide, which will describe the goals and structure of the AFMP. The guide will also provide a listing of all the mentors available for participation in the AFMP. Each new faculty member will be asked to fill out an application form and return it in a self-addressed envelope to the Program Coordinator within a week.

3. After receiving all the application forms, the Program Coordinator will match mentors and mentees and schedule an initial social gathering where mentees will be introduced to their mentors and the mentoring relationship formally initiated.

4. Letters will be sent out to all mentees indicating who their mentors will be and inviting them to attend the initial social gathering of mentors and mentees.

Recruitment, Selection and Training of Mentors
All mentors for the AFMP shall be drawn from experienced associate and full-time SPS faculty members currently teaching in SPS programs. While nominations and volunteers will be accepted, the final selection of mentors will be determined by the Program Coordinator in consultation with the SPS Director of Faculty. All mentors will be persons who (1) have demonstrated teaching effectiveness, (2) possess superior empathetic listening and interpersonal skills, (3) understand the importance of confidentiality, (4) have experience with the module(s) their mentees are assigned to teach and (5) express a willingness to serve as mentor to others. Furthermore, all mentors must be willing to participate in the mentor training workshop before they can serve as mentors. Compensation for mentors will be $150 per mentoring relationship, as determined by the Director of SPS Faculty in conjunction with the Dean of SPS.

The process for the recruitment and selection of mentor will be as follows:

1. The Program Coordinator in consultation with the SPS Director of Faculty will draw up a list of potential mentors based on the criteria listed above.

2. The Program Coordinator will send a letter to the potential mentors inviting them to take part in the AFMP as faculty mentors. The letter will explain the goals of the program, the expectations of faculty mentors, and the compensation for serving as a mentor. The letter will also explain that all mentors will need to go through a one day mentor training workshop. Enclosed with the letter will be a one page application form requesting some professional and biographical information, as well as information regarding their previous experiences with mentoring. If an individual receiving the letter from the SPS Director Faculty is interested in serving as a faculty mentor, he/she will complete the form and return it to the Program Coordinator by a specified date,

3. Upon receipt of the mentors' application forms the Program Coordinator will confirm the potential mentors' willingness to be part of the AFMP by contacting them by telephone or by email.

4. When a date for the mentor training is set, the Program Coordinator will contact the potential mentors again and invite them to participate in the one day mentor training workshop. The Program Coordinator develop the mentor biographical forms from the information provided on the mentor application and make the mentor biographical forms part of the AFMP Guide which will be made available to mentees.

5. The potential mentors will participate in a one day mentor training workshop conducted by the Program Coordinator.

6. Upon completion of the mentor training workshop the mentor will be paired with a mentee and invited to attend the initial social gathering to officially begin the mentoring process.

The mentor training program under the direction of the Program Coordinator shall seek to provide individuals with the skills and knowledge to be effective mentors in the AFMP. The training will consist of a one day (six hour) workshop, which will cover the following topics:

- an overview of the AFMP and its goals
- the phases of the mentoring process
- how to establish goals for the mentoring relationship
- communication skills
- crisis management and referral services
- how to close the relationship
- evaluation and assessment procedures
- suggested activities to do with a mentee

In addition to the one day workshop the Program Coordinator will be available to mentors for individual consultations on specific issues arising within the mentoring relationship.

The Matching of Mentors and Mentees

The key factor in the success of the mentoring program is the quality of the relationships developed by the mentors and mentees. Therefore, great care has to be taken in how mentors and mentees are paired together. Final decisions as to the matching of mentors and mentees shall rest with the Program Coordinator. However, research has shown that those programs, which allow mentees to have a say in the selection of a mentor, are the most satisfying. Therefore, where possible, mentors and mentees will be matched according to the subject matter, location preferences, and programs in which they teach. Where possible a mentee's request for a particular person to be a mentor will be honored. All efforts will be made to assign the mentee to teaching courses as soon as possible after required activities are completed.

In order to ensure that the matching of mentors and mentees has the greatest opportunity for success the following process will be followed.

(1) The Program Coordinator will develop a one page biographical sheet on each mentor, describing his or her professional background and any personal information a mentor chooses to reveal. These sheets will be made available to mentees.

(2) Mentees will be asked to complete an application form, which will include their hopes and goals for the mentoring experience, listing of previous mentoring experiences, and the identification of any persons among the mentor list they would like to have as their mentor.

(3) Based on the information provided on the mentee application form and his or her knowledge of the mentors, the program coordinator will match mentors and mentees together. No mentor will be allowed to have more than two mentees at a given time.

(4) The Program Coordinator shall organize an initial social gathering for mentors and mentees to meet each other. At this meeting the purpose of the AFMP will be explained and time allowed for mentoring partners to hold their initial meeting.

(5) The Program Coordinator will notify the mentors and mentees as to the pairings and invite them to attend an initial meeting for mentors and mentees.

General Parameters and Guidelines
While recognizing that each mentoring relationship will be unique, the AFMP will provide general guidelines for conducting the mentoring partnerships. The nature and focus of each mentoring relationship will vary according to the teaching skills and experience of each individual mentee. The general parameters of the AFMP are designed to provide structure for the mentoring relationships, while allowing mentoring partners to set goals that will be most beneficial to the mentee. Thus, these guidelines are designed to facilitate the effective management of the program without being intrusive or controlling. The general guidelines for each mentoring relationship will be as follows:

1. The mentoring partnership will shall be conducted through the time required for the mentee to complete two modules, one being co-taught with the mentor and the second being taught by the mentee alone.

2. The mentoring process will involve the following specified activities

   a. Prior to any teaching assignments, mentees will be required to observe at least two instructors (one of whom may be the mentor) teaching a class session. These observations will then be discussed with the mentor.
   b. For their first teaching assignment mentees will co-teach an entire module with the mentor. Mentors and mentees will meet at least one week prior to the beginning of class to discuss their respective roles and responsibilities

for the class. Mentees will have responsibility for teaching/facilitating a portion of each class session.

   c. After completing the first course and if recommended by the mentor and approved by the Director of Faculty, the mentee will teach a module on his/her own. Mentors and mentees will meet at least 2 times to discuss the progress of the course. The mentor will observe the mentee teaching during at least one class session, excluding week 1.
   d. If the mentor does not recommend that the mentee is ready to teach a module on his/her own, then the Program Director will meet with the mentor and mentee and discuss what steps should be taken to prepare the mentee to teach a module on his/her own. From that discussion the mentor, mentee and Program Coordinator will establish an individual action plan. Final approval of the action plan will rest with the SPS Director of Faculty.
   e. Mentees able to demonstrate extensive prior teaching experience may be allowed to forego co-teaching their first module, if approved by the Program Coordinator and the Director of Faculty.
   f. A visual diagram of the mentoring process is provided at the end of this proposal.

3. During their initial meeting(s), mentors and mentees will establish goals for the relationship and identify the activities they will do to achieve those goals.

4. The content of the conversations between the mentor and mentee will focus on the issues related to the mentor's and mentee's roles as instructors in SPS programs.

5. Mentors will be required to take the initiative in setting up meetings with the mentee and guiding the mentoring process.

6. The relationship between the mentor and mentee should be characterized by mutual respect, collaborative learning, and awareness of adult learning principles.

7. All conversations between mentors and mentees will be deemed confidential.

8. Progress reports on the mentoring partnership will be submitted jointly by the mentor and mentee to the program coordinator at three different points in the mentoring process: First, after have established goals for the mentoring relationship; Second, at the completion of a module co-taught by the mentor and mentee; Third, after the mentee has taught a module on his or her own.

9. If a mentor and mentee encounter a problem they cannot resolve together, they may call upon the Program Coordinator to meet with them with the intent of finding a mutually agreeable solution.

10. If for any reason either the mentor or mentee chooses to terminate the mentoring relationship, this decision will be communicated to the Program Coordinator and

the Program Coordinator will decide if a new mentor should be assigned to the mentee.

Other activities that mentors and mentees can do together include, but are not limited to, the following:

- discussion of a particular course or curriculum
- assistance in developing lesson plans
- discussion of various teaching techniques and approaches
- mentee/mentor journaling and sharing
- discussion of particular issues or problems as they arise
- reading an article or book together and discussing it
- discussion of grading
- shadow grading (mentor and mentee grade papers separately and then compare results)

Ending the Mentoring Relationship and Completion of the Program

After the mentee has taught one module on his or her own, his or her obligation to participation in the AFMP will have been satisfied. Before officially terminating the mentoring partnership, mentors and mentees will be asked to meet one last time to evaluate their progress toward the goals that were established in their initial meetings. First, they will determine if the goals were achieved. If the goals were achieved, then the mentor and mentee will determine if there are other reasons for the formal mentoring relationship to continue. If they choose to end the mentoring relationship, this decision will be reported by the mentor to the Program Coordinator. If it is determined that the initial goals were not achieved, the mentor and mentee will decide if continued mentoring would be helpful. If they decide that continued mentoring would be beneficial this will be communicated to the Program Coordinator and a new mentoring agreement will be established in consultation with the Program Coordinator and the SPS Director of Faculty. If it is determined that continued mentoring will not be helpful, the relationship will be terminated and this decision communicated by the mentor to the Program Coordinator.

Evaluation Procedures

In order to ensure the safety of mentors and mentees and the overall quality of the AFMP, evaluation and assessment of the program will be conducted at four different points. First, after mentors and mentees have established the goals for their relationship, these goals will be communicated to the Program Coordinator on a standardized form developed for that purpose.

Second, the mentor and mentee will meet to discuss the teaching strengths of the mentee, as well as areas where improvement is needed. A report detailing the mentees strengths and weaknesses as an instructor shall be submitted to the Director of Faculty, along with a recommendation from the mentor whether the mentee is ready to teach on his or her own. This report will be recorded on a standardized from and signed by both the mentor and the mentee.

Third, after the mentee teaches on his or her own, both the mentor and the mentee will each submit a final evaluation of the mentoring process. The mentor's report will be written on a standardized form and include a summary of the activities conducted in the mentoring progress, and an evaluation of the mentoring program as a whole. The mentor's report will written on a standardized form and include the opportunity recommend the need for the mentee to continue in the mentoring relationship. The mentee's report will be written on a standardized from and include a report on the progress made toward the goals established at the beginning of the mentoring process, an evaluation of the mentor, and an evaluation of the mentoring program.

Finally, after one year of operation the Program Coordinator in conjunction with the SPS Director of Faculty will conduct a summative evaluation of the AFMP and make adjustments as needed.

Costs

The cost of developing and running the AFMP will be as follows

1. Mentors will be paid $150 for their participation in the mentoring program. Mentors will receive the normal full compensation for teaching a module when they co-teach a course with the mentee.

2. Mentees will receive $125 for co-teaching a module with the mentor, and the normal instructor's compensation for the module they teach on their own. Mentees will not be compensated for class sessions where they observe other faculty members teaching.

3. The Program Coordinator will receive compensation or release from other responsibilities determined by the SPS Director of Faculty and approved by the Dean of SPS.
4. Other costs will be mostly internal, except perhaps some minimal costs for training materials, travel expenses, social events, and occasional communications, such as a newsletter.

An estimated annual expense budget for the AFMP (not including the compensation for the Program Coordinator) above those expenses already designated in the SPS General Operating Budget is listed below. Figures are based on the estimated number of new faculty members to be hired in the 2002-2003 year and compensation for mentors and mentees currently approved by the SPS Director of Faculty.

Mentor Compensation (30 mentors)	$4500
Mentee Compensation (30 mentees)	3750
Training Materials	100
Social Events	100
Other Expenses	50
Total Expenses	$8500

Benefits

It is anticipated that the development of the AFMP will improve the overall quality of teaching in SPS program. New associate faculty members will receive support and guidance at a critical time in their development as instructors. With the help of their mentors, the overall competence of new SPS associate faculty members will increase. Furthermore, a greater degree of collegiality can be expected to develop between faculty members. Finally, because of the investment of time and energy given to new faculty members, it can be anticipated that the commitment and loyalty of SPS associate faculty members to Eastern University will be greatly enhanced.

Action Steps

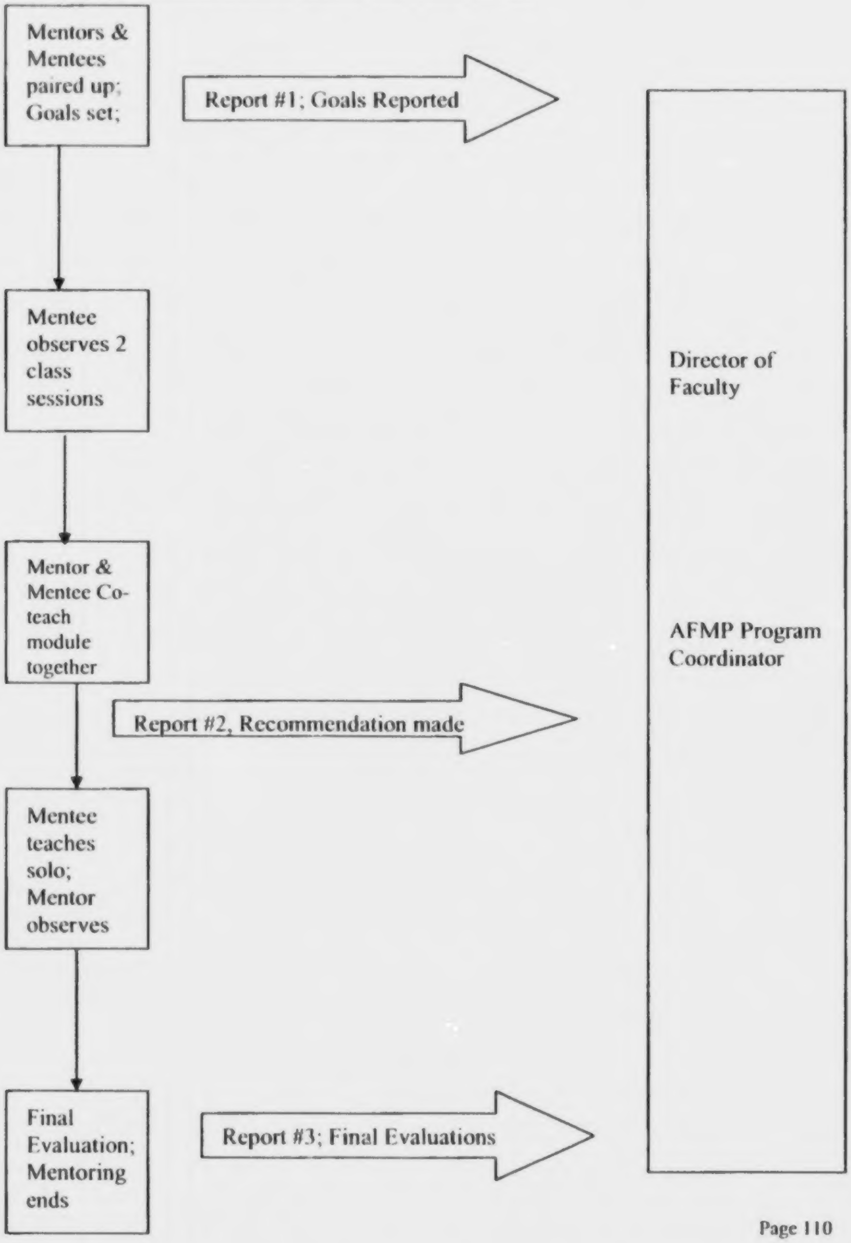
In order for this proposal to be enacted, the following steps must be taken

1. The proposal must be formally endorsed by Director of Faculty and the Dean of SPS.
2. The Director of SPS Faculty will appoint a Program Coordinator for the AFMP.
3. The Program Coordinator will develop a plan for implementation and evaluation of the AFMP.
4. The Director of Faculty in conjunction with the Dean of SPS, will establish a budget based on this proposal and the implementation plan.
5. The Program Coordinator will begin the development of the program in accordance with the budget and the plan that has been developed.

Summary

The purpose of this paper has been to present the SPS Associate Faculty Mentoring Program as model for other institutions interested in developing adjunct faculty mentoring programs. While the program was developed within the unique context of the SPS, there are many concepts, principles and ideas that are transferable to other institutions. By presenting this proposal I hope to encourage the development of similar mentoring programs, so that the needs of adjunct faculty and students they serve may be served.

SPS Associate Faculty Mentoring Program Flow Chart


Mentors & Mentees paired up; Goals set;
Report #1; Goals Reported
Mentee observes 2 class sessions
Mentor & Mentee Co-teach module together
Report #2, Recommendation made
Mentee teaches solo; Mentor observes
Final Evaluation; Mentoring ends
Report #3; Final Evaluations
Director of Faculty
AFMP Program Coordinator

Using Distance Education Technologies to Enhance In-class discussion Among Older Learners in an Institute for Learning in Retirement

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Distance Education (DE) is becoming a more common mode of delivering adult education. At the other end of the age spectrum, distance education technologies are finding their way into the elementary schools. But, educational programs for older adults have yet to experiment with these technologies. This is the state of affairs for several reasons. There is a lingering stereotype that older adults have high levels of computer anxiety that would prevent them from using DE (Dyck, Gee, & Smither, 1998; Ellis & Allaire, 1999; Laguna & Babcock, 1997; Maurer, 1994; Torkzadeh & Angulo, 1992). Similarly the physical changes associated with aging are thought to present a barrier to the use of technology. Yet, numerous studies have found that the older student adapts well to a technology rich environment (Cody, Dunn, Hoppin, & Wendt, 1999; Czaja, Guerrier, Nair, & Landauer, 1993; Eilers, 1989). And studies have shown that accommodations can be made in the technology to circumvent any disability that comes with age (Jones & Bayen, 1998; Spiezle, 1999).

Slowly the tide is shifting as interest in DE climbs among the older population. Seniornet, a leading computer education program for seniors indicated that 27% of the older population will be online by the year 2003 (Morrell, Dailey, Feldman, Mayhorn, & Echt, 2001). This is up from the estimate of 14% over the age of 50 given by Timmermann in her 1998 article *The role of information technology in older adult learning*. (Timmermann, 1998).

Older adult leisure learning programs should take advantage of this growing interest in DE and expand the number of channels through which they reach their audience. Many are skeptical of applying DE to these programs because it is thought that the social element of attending class is of the utmost importance and that DE would eliminate this attractive educational element or that it is difficult to achieve at best (Davie, 1988; Morrell et al., 2001) Admittedly the social element is different when communicating through technology. Several authors describe a certain synergy of social support that is gained from combining face-to-face classes with listserv support (Bates, 2000; Johanson, Norland, Olson, Huth, & Bodensteiner, 1999). Holmberg 1978 even went so far as to suggest that the technology was necessary to break down the isolation that learners feel when working at a distance (Holmberg, 1978). Despite the distancing effects of technology the demand for anytime anywhere learning is growing among leisure learners.

DE is emerging as a means of reaching new markets in adult education. In fact, the premiere provider of leisure learning services, Elderhostel, is now promoting DE courses targeted to those seniors who are seeking educational opportunities online. It is estimated that only 19% of all adults enroll in formal classes and the numbers are even less for those over the age of 65 (Aslanian & Brickell, 1980). Making armchair learning available can serve to increase this percentage.

Applications of DE

At present DE is most often used as an adjunct to face-to-face classes. Technologies such as web based course materials, videotaped lectures in combination with face-to-face classes offers a unique opportunity to circumvent the barriers that temporary illness and transportation difficulties present to older learners. Long term, DE could provide a sense of community to learners who have had to "retire" from face-to-face class learning because of disability or transportation. A survey of Older Learner Programs conducted via the listserv EINFORUM in August of 2002 found that administrators believe illness to be the number one reason for class absences and that health concerns account for anywhere from 10% to 40% of all class time missed. DE would provide the continuity that missing a class sessions disrupts.

DE applications not only reach out to new participants but they allow the classroom experience to be expanded across the barrier of time. Technologies such as chat rooms, listservs and webcasting could encourage students to continue in-class discussions beyond the limitations of the traditional class hour.

Distance Education at Duke's Institute for Learning in Retirement

Students at Duke University's Institute for Learning in Retirement (DILR) often find that they wish to continue their in-class discussions over lunch or coffee. The blending of course work with personal experiences is a unique and enriching educational experience however, class time did not always allow students to explore these connections fully. In the fall of 2000 it was proposed that DE could be used to help students to explore their life histories and continue to enrich classes with this material while not consuming too much class time.

To this end this author experimented with the use of electronic discussion groups, e-books, software and Web page authoring tools to enhance in-class discussions at DILR as part of a doctoral dissertation in Instructional Technology and Distance Education at Nova Southeastern University. Each of the technologies employed was aligned with the goal of assisting students in writing their memoirs. A semester long face-to-face course entitled *Documenting Your Life* met weekly. The 14 students in this class documented their stories by designing web pages through the National Endowment for the Humanities *My History is America's History Web site* (www.myhistory.org). They also participated in a five-month long electronic discussion group concerned with providing support to them as they wrote their memoirs. These same 14 students documented episodes from their life stories through the use of e-books and freestanding software entitled *MyLife*. They were joined in the web page project by an additional 16 DILR students from other classes for a total of 37 stories posted by 30 students.

The technology was designed to create additional outlets for these students to post their reminiscences and to support the concept in adult education that students' life experiences are a legitimate source from which to construct knowledge. R.S. Usher in his article *Adult students and their experience: Developing a resource for learning* discusses how traditional education does not value experiential learning and how students over their lifetimes are taught to trivialize their experiences (Usher, 1986). Older adults are caught between their drive to explore their reminiscences and the dictates of society that this is inappropriate in an educational setting (Butler, 1980-1981). Creating a place in cyberspace where this kind of reflection could occur was a service in and of itself. A sort of spillover effect was expected too as the use of the technology created a grassroots legitimacy for students stories to be included as part of the educational process. The research studied how effectively students were able to use the technologies and the impact on in-class discussion.

Student Reactions to the DE technologies

In each case the technologies were well received by the students in the *Documenting Your Life* class. There were no deficits noted in the students' abilities to manipulate the ebook, the software or in posting of the web pages, exempting server related technical difficulties. Despite the ease of use students did not always readily adopt the technologies as part of their regular pursuit of creating their written memoirs. For example, in a one hour class session students were introduced to the M*yLife* software and while several purchased the program for their own use the majority expressed a preference for word processing their memoirs or even typing them.

The web page was by far the most effective application as demonstrated by the fact that the 14 original students were joined by 16 others and four students posted more than one story to the site. www.myhistory.org proved to be easy to use and search. The students expressed satisfaction not only with documenting the story but also with being technically savvy enough to create the web page.

The web pages, the ebook and the software were all individual supports to capturing one's life story. A discussion based intervention was also introduced. A semester-long supportive class listserv had been planned for the class as a social support to the autobiographers. It was thought that this computer-mediated communication would directly impact discussion in face-to-face classes.

Some difficulty was encountered in the application of the listserv. Despite the fact that all were familiar with email and 20% had previously participated in listservs the posting rate was very poor with only 49 messages posted over five months. This author probed these results and through an anonymous class survey found that a critical number of students were unfamiliar with the uses of a listserv. Even more critical though was the fact that the students found the listserv "too public". This perception, that their comments were being posted on the web, minimized participation.

Other studies have found similar barriers to listserv participation. The most frequently cited barrier was lack of time. Also notable was the number of studies that reported that novice computer users need additional training even if they are familiar with email applications. Students do not seem to intuitively understand the value of one-to-many communication that is promoted on a listserv. Students are also more likely to rely on media that is familiar to them and get easily overwhelmed by the number of messages a listserv generates. Other researchers have also found that students consider a listserv to be a public forum and that this inhibits postings. Also problematic is the finding that interest in a listserv tends to diminish over time (Davie, 1988; Davis & Holt, 1998; Johanson et al., 1999; Meier, 2000; Pearson, 1996; Ross, 1995).

Gingerich, 1999 found that students using listserv needed to demonstrate a significant amount of self directedness in their learning and that students who are not separated by time and geography may find the list less useful Gingerich's work did show that non-traditionally aged students participated more freely in listserv and were more likely to use a list for social support (Gingerich, Abel, D'Aprix, Nordquist, & Riebschleger, 1999).

Differences in age among classmates interfered with listserv discussion as well. It should be noted too that the subjects discussed in the literature were much younger than those who participated in this study and the age gap that is discussed is much smaller. Davis (1999) reported that younger students felt judged by older students on the list. Older students in this study stated that they did not relate well to younger students' experiences. They concluded the younger students were immature and a kind of alienation arose in the dialogue. Older students posted longer messages but not as frequently as the younger group (Davis & Holt, 1998).

Similarly Hawisher found a difference between women and men. Although computer mediated communication has the potential to democratize the classroom women in this study tended to maintain conversation by asking questions and voicing support while men introduced new topics. The topics introduced by men also received more attention than women's (Hawisher & Seife, 1992).

Often students will lurk on lists perhaps due to a fear of public posting or because they are too overloaded with email messages. Often lurkers are viewed as not fully participating in the class yet a growing number of studies give credence to lurking as a learning style. Burge, 1994 concludes that lurking is actually a coping mechanism not a sign of alienation and that lurkers still learn (Burge, 1994).

The use of listservs in adult education seems a way of efficiently extending the opportunities for discussion. Listserv unlike other DE technologies discussed above, provides an opportunity for less formal social support to be exchanged among learners. Autobiographical postings have been acknowledged to be a means of fusing course content, pedagogy and life experiences. Creed 1996 went so far as to say that listservs could produce stronger long-term learning (Creed, 1996). The instructor can take a passive role on the list or actively guide and direct discussion. Regardless of which approach an individual instructor takes research into listserv finds that the lists tends to blur the lines between instructors and students with a good deal of peer mentoring and venting taking place; an ideal interplay in adult education.

Conclusions

During the course of an eight-month implementation a number of DE technologies were introduced to students at DILR. In the research design it was though that participation in the listserv would be the most interactive technology available and would spark greater levels of discussion in classes in general at DILR. However inhibitions kept students from taking advantage of this technology. Yet a statistically significant change was seen in the frequency of class discussion following the implementation of the technology rich curriculum.

Classes were observed before the implementation of the class and then again following it. Only one observer was used and coding was consistent for both sessions. The classes chosen for the baseline observations were selected because their content was judged by program administration to lend itself to connections with students' personal experiences. Classes in the second round were selected because the instructor's had an interest in the principles of adult education including the integration of personal experiences into curriculum.

As shown in table 1 these two rounds of classroom observations (17 classes total with 242 students) documented an almost threefold increase in the number of students sharing their personal experiences during class discussion.

Table 1

Average Observed Student Reminiscence per class session Class

	October 2001	April 2002	t
Shares a personal reminiscence	3.7	10.1	.064*
Actively solicits a reminiscence	0	.14	.356
Asks a question of instructor	5.50	13.71	.079*
Asks a question of student	1.5	7.0	.068*
Uses I remember statements	0	.57	.356
Uses You will recall statements	0	.14	.356
Emotional reaction connected to reminiscence	1.0	2.43	.229
Emotional reaction not connected to reminiscence	8.3	21.57	.139
Factual recall not connected to reminiscence	7.2	29.00	.066*

Note: October 2001 N = 10 classes. April 2002 N= 7 classes

*Significant at the .10 level

The chance of students from the *Documenting Your Life* class being involved in either group of observed classes was equal. And in fact they were fairly evenly distributed in both groups of observations. While it is possible that compounding variables entered into the equation over the two-semester long implementation the DE applications accomplished their goals of heightening awareness of the value of using adult's own life experiences as content for in-class discussion.

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Letting Learners Lead: An Investigation of Adult Student Technology Mentors

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Recently published research on the impact of the Internet and e-mail by the Pew Charitable Trusts and others has clearly shown that the Internet and e-mail have influenced most aspects of American life. Academia is one of the areas that have been most positively affected by the technology, especially adult higher education. Thanks to the growth of the Internet, especially the increasing popularity of the World Wide Web, adult learners have moved to the forefront of cutting edge educational and technological endeavors. Regardless of whether those opportunities are presented through degree programs offered entirely online, or in classes utilizing computers and the web in "hybrid" leaning programs (programs that combine traditional class meetings with computerized research and computer-mediated communication), they are nonetheless new and exciting to a faction of the learning population that has for so long been relegated to the cramped classrooms and fringes of the higher education community.

'Nontraditional' Students and the Use of Computers

According to an article published in the June 14, 2002 issue of The Chronicle of Higher Education, "almost seventy-five percent of today's undergraduate students are considered 'nontraditional,' because of their age, financial status, or when they enrolled in college…(Evelyn, 2002)." The past decade has brought numerous transformations in the foundation of the American life, including changes in the economy, the workplace, and even in the home. When the changes of recent years are taken into account, this statistic becomes unsurprising. Added to this noted statistical change is the belief of many educators involved in the adult higher education community that the overall age and numbers of students in their classes is increasing. At the same time, however, these statistics point to one of two things: Either the 'nontraditional' student is no longer an anomaly, or a new definition for what is considered 'nontraditional' needs to be applied. For the purposes of this exploration, it is necessary to consider adult learners 'nontraditional.' While the definition of what makes a 'nontraditional' student is still a point of contention among educators, it is clear that the changes in American life have also prompted changes to the framework of the classroom environment.

The use of computer technology has become common for the majority of traditional age college students today. The ability to use the Internet and computer technology as a means of completing educational ventures has also grown to be popular, if not imperative in the adult (nontraditional) learning community. Computer mediated communication is quickly becoming one of the most widely used means of sharing information worldwide. Data gathered by Princeton Survey Research Associates between November 2, 2000 and December 15, 2000 reveals that fifteen percent of adult Internet users go online in a typical day to find an answer to a question or gather additional information. They also found that people under the age of fifty with at least some college education were the most likely to take an online class, five percent of adult internet users reported taking an online course at the time of the survey, and another five percent indicated they had at some time taken an online class (Pew, 2000).

As technology costs have continued to drop and more nontraditional students seek alternative ways to complete degrees, competition among institutions of higher education, and even non-accredited commercial providers of education/training for students has become particularly fierce. For the large segment of the population known as "baby-boomers" whose free time has become increasingly scarce, the ability to use technology for learning has evolved into a unique means of making time to pursue educational endeavors that were previously too time constraining.

Daily it becomes more apparent that the various uses of computer technology as a means of communication, entertainment, and as a productivity tool for businesses and organizations are widespread throughout our world. Yet, there is a segment of the population that has historically lagged behind in its adaptation to computer technology and use of the Internet. The term "digital divide" has come to represent non-users or even limited access users of technology. This term became popularized as research continually indicated that the segment of the population fitting this description were typically African Americans, or Hispanic Americans in low socio-economic groups. According to a February 2002 Department of Commerce Report, however, Black and Hispanic households were going online faster than white and Asian-American households during the same period (NUA, 2002).

This information becomes particularly useful when examining adult degree completion programs where the populations are generally very diverse. Recent data on Internet usage from the Department of Commerce indicates one hundred and forty three million people (54 % of the total population) were online as of February 2002. The report also shows a decline in the digital divide during the past year as Internet use among households earning less than $15,000 per year increased by 25% between December 1999 and September 2001 (NUA, 2002)

While the Department of Commerce research indicates a decrease in the overall "digital divide," a study undertaken by Flowers and Woodruff from 1999 through 2001 showed "the largest ethnic differences were indicated in the self-discipline and time management needs, computer access, and technical skills between Caucasian and Black sub-groups" at the adult degree program at the University of South Alabama. While these research findings are no surprise when considering the economic status and opportunities of the Southern Alabama region, it nonetheless indicates the presence of a "digital divide" in nontraditional programs.

A poll commissioned by the Ohio Learning Network through the University of Cincinnati this year surveyed five hundred and twenty randomly selected adults who had earned college credit but not completed a degree, and revealed that Ohioans want to complete online college degrees, specifically in the areas of business, nursing, and health care.

This confirmed the results of an earlier survey completed in 1999. "Nearly seventy percent of Ohio citizens felt completing a degree was important to them (Wood, 2002)." The question is then not one of whether a digital divide exists, but rather, how to increase computer literacy and access for those interested in completing degrees online.

The Digital Divide in Cleveland

Capital's Centers for Lifelong Learning, especially in Cleveland, have been thrust into the midst of a growing controversy regarding increased usage of technology by its faculty and learners. While many would like to see the Centers become even more involved in distance learning and technology use, there are still some who are reluctant to accept the changes.

One issue that seems to be reoccurring is the "digital divide" and how it affects the student body. On one hand, the faculties are eager to engage learners in activities that include the use of computer for research and communication. On the other, the Cleveland Center's faculty is facing the reality that 72% of the learners of students are minorities with a rage of attitudes about technology, access to technology, and skills. (In contrast, only 44% of the learners in Capital's Centers for Lifelong Learning statewide are minorities.) The Cleveland Center is no stranger to the "digital divide" and has been working to bridge the gaps in skills and access with a number of new programs and increased opportunities. While meeting with open acceptance by the majority of students, the Center still has a faction of students that are reluctant, and in a few cases even belligerent towards a need for computer literacy, often citing such problems as high cost, and difficulty in learning the new skills.

On the opposite end of this divide is the mandate for what Gilster terms "digital literacy," or "the ability to understand and use information in multiple formats from a wide range of sources when it is presented via computers (Gilster, 1997)." More specifically, he encourages competency in both critical thinking and reading: Web users as learners need to be able to make judgments about the information or content of online information, read non-linear segments of text for keywords, and develop search skills to make judgments about information presented in hypertext formats that often appear somewhat disjointed. Gilster's call for "digital literacy" becomes even more critical now that the majority of academic resources and research have been digitally catalogued in the state of Ohio, by the OhioLink system. The ability to make use of the technology has become imperative for all higher education students, 'traditional' or 'nontraditional'.

The need to provide learners with the skills to function in the digital world, both academically and professionally is clear. Additional efforts in the last six months to improve support for learners have included the regular hiring of adjunct faculty to serve as on-call tutors in math, writing, and research skills. The faculty has determined that action needs to be taken to provide Cleveland Center adult learners with proper training in using technology and telecommunications as educational tools and resources, but like many nontraditional programs, there are limitations. The limitations faced in Cleveland are not unlike those faced by many nontraditional programs: Scarcities of time, funds, and training have made it difficult to keep up with the pace of technology implementation in the Center. Yet, the need exists for learners in our programs to not only achieve "digital literacy" but to become proficient and confident users of technology on a general level.

The Cleveland Center Learning Community

The dominance of African-American students in the Cleveland Center has led to the development of a very strong and diverse learning community. However, many of these same students are a part of Cleveland's digital divides.

The director of Admissions and Student Services (DASS), who has been with the Center over ten years, as well as two-thirds of the administrative support staff, is African-American. They have been an instrumental force in the development of a Student Mentor and Tutor group that provides academic support services to other students in the Center. This closely-knit group has grown over the past two years to become a solid support resource for adult learners in the Cleveland Center, and an integral, positive piece of the center's culture. The group consists of a few adjunct faculty volunteers and about fifteen students and alumni who have demonstrated their ongoing commitment to the success of the mentoring program and the life of the Center.

Educational psychologists firmly believe in the effectiveness of peer-to-peer learning methods, and the idea that the formality of the professor/student relationship can put a strain on difficult or controversial concepts. The popularity of the mentoring program and the interest of some of the technology student mentors led to the idea of possibly letting learners experienced in technology, especially those who have successfully completed the required business course "Information Technology," become more actively involved in helping other learners with academic information technology skills.

The faculty has struggled for several years seeking help in the form of lab assistants for students using the computer lab, but financial support was not available. This spring, the Cleveland Center decided to offer free workshops with the Student Mentoring group for current students willing to invest their time in four lab class meetings. It was thought that by having the Student Mentor group lead the workshops students would "have opportunities to socialize and should recognize and be able to embrace the essential skills required for learning (Currey, 2001)." Furthermore, it was felt that using Student Mentors would improve results because mentors could break down the barriers caused by the formal professor/student relationship, and the mentors would be able to provide supports such as "listening, providing structure, expressing positive expectations, serving as an advocate, and sharing ourselves (Daloz, 1986)."

Investigating The Pilot Program

In March 2002 the author worked with the DASS and three members of the Student Mentor group to develop a curriculum for a series of four workshops on the general topic of computer literacy. It was decided that since the lab capacity is only ten students, it would be necessary to offer multiple sessions, and a small stipend was paid to the teaching mentors for their work. The three students agreed to share responsibility for teaching specific sections of the course. The workshops consisted of four sessions covering: 1) Basic Computer Literacy, 2) Microsoft Word, 3) Microsoft Excel, and 4) Internet Literacy and E-Mail.

A brief pre-test and post-test covering basic skills and attitudes about computer technology (front and back of a single page) was developed by the author and administered at the first and last workshop sessions. (See Appendix.)

Results of the Pilot Program

Twenty-six students initially signed up to participate in the free workshops. Nineteen actually began the program the first evening, and fourteen completed all four sessions, for a retention rate of 74% from the first day of the workshops to the conclusion of the last session.

The pre-test and post-test administered for the program was the same document (See Appendix) used at the first and last sessions. The reason for this was to make it easier to determine change.

The "Skills" portion of the assessment indicated the following results as shown on Table 1:

Table 1:
Skills Assessment:

	N=19		N=14		
	Pre-Test Results		**Post-Test Results**		
Question Number	**Number Correct**	**Percentage Correct**	**Number Correct**	**Percentage Correct**	**Percentage Improvement**
1	11	0.5789	12	0.8571	0.2782
2	14	0.7368	13	0.9285	0.1917
3	11	0.5789	11	0.7857	0.2068
4	13	0.6842	12	0.8571	0.1729
5	12	0.6315	11	0.7857	0.1542
6	14	0.7368	13	0.9285	0.1917
7	12	0.6315	11	0.7857	0.1542
8	7	0.3684	11	0.7857	0.4173
9	11	0.5789	12	0.8571	0.2782
10	13	0.6842	13	0.9285	0.2443

While workshop participants demonstrated improvement in basic computer skills for all topics covered and tested in the workshops and assessment instrument, most apparent are the results pertaining to Question #8 which pertained to the use of web pages at 42% improvement. Thus, it would seem that while learners are interested in using technology and particularly the Internet, this is the area needing the most attention for future workshops.

Questions #1 and #9, which pertained to general computer terminology and word processing documents used with e-mail indicated improvement of 28%, the second highest improvement level.

The results of the Attitude Assessment for pre- and post-testing situations will be found on the next page.

The Likert-type scale used to review the participants' attitudes seemed to show a tendency to move many opinions from the "4" ranking (between "strongly agree" and "agree") to "5" ("strongly agree") ranking for questions 1-6. These six questions pertained to home and business access and use of computer technology, as well as the need for computer and information literacy. The end result was a clear majority in agreement with those statements (See Appendix).

The two questions pertaining to excessive cost issues of computers and internet access (#7 and #8) showed an interesting tendency to move from "strongly disagree" in the pre-test to mixed levels of "agree" to "strongly disagree." Perhaps this issue is worthy of further investigation and surveying with learners, especially since a large majority of Cleveland Center learners participate in Financial Aid programs to fund their educations.

Table 2:

Attitudes Assessment: (Number)

	N=19					N=11*				
	Pre-Test Results					Post-Test Results				
	Strongly Agree		Agree		*Strongly Disagree*	*Strongly Agree*		Agree		*Strongly Disagree*
	5	*4*	*3*	*2*	*1*	*5*	*4*	*3*	*2*	*1*
Question Number										
1	13	4	1	0	1	9	1	1	0	0
2	16	3	0	0	1	8	1	2	0	0
3	5	4	10	0	0	4	1	4	2	0
4	12	4	2	1	0	9	1	1	0	0
5	13	4	1	1	0	9	1	1	0	0
6	13	5	1	0	0	8	1	2	0	1
7	0	0	0	6	13	0	0	2	2	7
8	0	2	0	8	9	0	0	2	4	3
9	12	5	2	0	0	8	1	2	0	0
10	7	5	5	1	1	4	2	4	1	0

Attitudes Assessment: (Percentages)

	N=19					N=11*				
	Pre-Test Results					Post-Test Results				
	Strongly Agree		*Agree*		*Strongly Disagree*	*Strongly Agree*		*Agree*		*Strongly Disagree*
	5	*4*	*3*	*2*	*1*	*5*	*4*	*3*	*2*	*1*
Question Number										
1	0.6842	0.2105	0.0526	0.0000	0.0526	0.8181	0.0909	0.0909	0.0000	0.0000
2	0.8421	0.1578	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.7272	0.0909	0.1818	0.0000	0.0000
3	0.2631	0.2105	0.5263	0.0000	0.0000	0.3636	0.0909	0.3636	0.1818	0.0000
4	0.6315	0.2105	0.1052	0.0526	0.0000	0.8181	0.0909	0.0909	0.0000	0.0000
5	0.6842	0.2105	0.0526	0.0526	0.0000	0.8181	0.0909	0.0909	0.0000	0.0000
6	0.6842	0.2631	0.0526	0.0000	0.0000	0.7272	0.0909	0.1818	0.0000	0.0909
7	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.3159	0.6842	0.0000	0.0000	0.1818	0.1818	0.6363
8	0.0000	0.1052	0.0000	0.4210	0.4736	0.0000	0.0000	0.1818	0.3636	0.2727
9	0.6315	0.2631	0.1052	0.0000	0.0000	0.7272	0.0909	0.1818	0.0000	0.0000
10	0.3684	0.2631	0.2631	0.0526	0.0526	0.3636	0.1818	0.3636	0.0909	0.0000

*3 students did not complete back of page

Conclusions

The brief analysis of the assessment instrument seems to indicate that not only were the workshops successful in improving participants' basic computer literacy skills, but there was also a shift in their attitudes about the use of computers and information technology. It would seem that this pilot program was one small step toward improvement of "digital literacy" in the Cleveland Center.

Further evidence of participant satisfaction was discovered through the use of a workshop survey that permitted learners to write their own unsolicited qualitative comments about the program. While those results are not included here, all remarks were positive.

It would appear from the skills assessment that learners are not only interested in learning more about the use of the internet for e-mail and academic research, but it is a necessity. This skill area showed the greatest improvement from pre- to post-test. Again, it is likely the socio-economic backgrounds of workshop participants have limited their exposure to Internet usage.

The use of student mentors is an area worthy of further investigation. It seems clear, after having discussed the project with the DASS who is the advisor of this group that the student mentors involved in the project also gained a great deal in terms of new learning from this endeavor. In addition to building their individual self-esteem and self-confidence, those who are considering career path changes into the areas of possibly training or teaching also had the opportunity to experience teaching and all the planning and assessment work that goes into it "behind the scenes." Thus, we are "letting learners lead" in terms of improving digital literacy in the Cleveland Center and narrowing the digital divide. It is a "win-win" situation for everyone: student mentors, workshop participants and, of course, the faculty who work with these students in the classroom.

A final observation seems to confirm the research of Stewart, Totten and Ursery (2001) who observed "The digital classroom requires a similar model to connect technology with community with reflection to form a kind of sociotechnical learning environment. Using this model, a prerequisite to creating community would be to address participants' anxiety about engaging in this environment by designing courses that encourage and support high levels of communication. This communication can build the community, which can then serve as a vehicle for lessening uncertainty and move the student toward reflection and learning in a computer mediated environment."

It appears that using student mentors to help adult learners embrace technology for their educational endeavors is a low-cost and high-reward opportunity worthy of further development, refinement, and study.

APPENDIX—Copy of Assessment Instrument

CAPITAL UNIVERSITY CLEVELAND CLL
Computer Skills Workshops

Post-Workshop Skills and Attitudes Assessment

Circle "T" if the statement is true; circle "F" if the statement is false.

1. The term "computer hardware" means the physical equipment such as the keyboard, monitor, and mouse, used to operate a computer. T F

2. "Software" is the name used for programs used on a computer that enable a user to perform various tasks. T F

3. If someone wanted to write a term or research paper for a college course, the best program to use would be Microsoft EXCEL. T F

4. Before a person can get to the World Wide Web to do research, s/he would NOT necessarily need to have the computer connected to the Internet. T F

5. A modem is a common piece of computer equipment used to connect home computer users to the Internet using telephone lines. T F

6. The only way to check your spelling and punctuation in a word-processed document is to use a college dictionary. T F

7. When sending an e-mail message, it can only be sent to one person at a time. T F

8. URL stands for Uniform Resource Locator. It is a web address. T F

9. If someone wrote an assignment at home using a computer, the only way to get a copy to the course instructor would be to print it out on paper and either deliver it or send it in the U.S. Mail. T F

10. Microsoft Word is a popular word processing software program. T F

PLEASE TURN PAPER OVER AND COMPLETE QUESTIONS ON BACK.

Computer Technology Attitudes Assessment

**Please rate each of the following statements to the degree you agree or disagree.
Circle the number to indicate how you feel about each statement.
5 means you strongly agree, 3 means you agree, and 1 means you strongly disagree.**

	Strongly Agree	*Agree*		*Strongly Disagree*	
1. The ability to use a computer is essential to be successful in college.	5	4	3	2	1
2. Most adults will need to be willing to continue learning new computer skills for personal or professional growth and development.	5	4	3	2	1
3. Employers should expect their employees to be able to use the Internet for work or research.	5	4	3	2	1
4. The ideal situation for a college student is to have access to a computer at home.	5	4	3	2	1
5. The ability to access the Internet from home is very useful for college students.	5	4	3	2	1
6. Information literacy is a skill for learning that is just as important as reading, writing and math.	5	4	3	2	1
7. Computers are too expensive to have at home.	5	4	3	2	1
8. Internet access is too expensive to have at home.	5	4	3	2	1
9. E-mail has become an important means of communication because of its speed, low cost, and convenience.	5	4	3	2	1
10. Employers should expect their employees to be familiar with basic e-mail skills.	5	4	3	2	1

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Using the Web to Sustain an Academic Community

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Introduction

Empire State College has been in existence for thirty years. The college was created by Ernest Boyer, then the Chancellor of the State University of New York. From its inception, ESC has had a state-wide presence as an autonomous SUNY College. Unlike many other "experimental" institutions, this one would be staffed by its own full time faculty. But Boyer and his team produced little more than a sketch of the college they had in mind. It was left to the faculty and administrators of the college to work out the details. Not surprisingly, the institution attracted employees who were willing to experiment and take an occasional risk. Perhaps because everyone was involved in the intense experience of literally creating a college, no one particularly worried about sustaining a sense of community.

The community that has emerged is unique in several important respects. It is a college in dispersion, with more than forty locations spread around the state of New York. Our faculty are called mentors, and fulfill many roles beyond the scope of traditional academics. It is a college without departments, where mentors share their working lives with colleagues from many fields of study. Teaching classes is rare; more typically, mentors develop individual "contract studies: with their students, offer small group studies, or develop and deliver distance learning courses. Much of our time is devoted to helping students design their own curricula (their individual "degree programs"), and finding "learning resources" with which to work.

Fast forward thirty years, and Empire State College finds itself facing a very new challenge. No longer trying to create a distinctive identity nor fighting for existence, we find ourselves facing a growing number of retirements and seeking institutional renewal. The senior faculty, fond of sharing stories about the pitched battles of "the good old days," are reaching retirement or have past it. The first generation has been joined by a second, and will be replaced by a third.

The challenge we face is simple. We will confront large scale retirements over the coming decade. How can we: preserve and pass on what's best from a largely oral tradition of mentoring? How can we capture "on paper" the increasingly complex policies and procedures that most of us have learned only gradually over a period of years? How can we make room for the new ideas and new technologies that our next generation of mentors has to offer? This essay begins to explore those challenges—ones that we believe have parallels in a range of "experimenting institutions" that emerged in the decades of the 70s and 80s.

Orienting New Mentors: The Traditional Approach

In the early years of Empire State College, the orientation of new faculty moved from an exclusively local affair into a phase built around an annual "New Mentor Workshop" held at a conference facility and usually lasting three days. New mentors from across the state met members of the college administration, got to know other new mentors from various geographical regions, and engaged in interactive learning activities designed and delivered with generous foundation support. These workshops supplemented and re-enforced local "on the job training" (sometimes systematic, but more often informal), overseen by a regional associate dean and carried out primarily by mentor colleagues. But the overall institutional context is also important to note. During the first decade, college policies and procedures were still evolving, often the subject of heated conversation at college-wide gatherings. It seemed as if everyone was interested in even the finer points of these policies, and new mentors were welcomed into the conversation. It was an implicit but powerful part of new mentor "orientation." Through these many conversations and struggles, a strong sense of community was formed. It was not that we all did the same things in exactly the same way. Certainly not! But we all faced the same challenges, and recognized each other as having a shared interest in making a new institution work. We recognized fellow pioneers.

During the second decade of ESC's history (no doubt much to the relief of administrators and to those who wished for concreteness and clarity) more formalized policies began to fall into place. New mentors were presented with fat tomes of policies and procedures. For example, issues related to educational planning and the assessment of experiential learning were addressed and codified in a volume obscurely entitled "Resources and Criteria." Importantly too, funding for the much-loved New Mentor Workshops ran out. Responsibility for the orientation of new mentors was carried out almost exclusively at the local level, and the roiling boil of debate over emerging policy (frustrating for many, but collegially critical) was reduced to a simmer and relegated to a standing committee of the college's governance system. And, by this time, what was once a flood of new mentors was reduced to a relative trickle. The aging process had begun to set in.

In the mid eighties, the college's associate deans produced a "Mentor's Handbook," designed both to introduce new faculty to the theory and practice of mentoring, and to capture some of the accumulated wisdom produced by nearly twenty years of working with adult students. During the coming decade, this document became the centerpiece of new mentor orientation, and went through three substantial revisions.

During this same period, the diversity of programs and of approaches to teaching and learning within the college sharply increased. In the first decade, the vast majority of students had come to us as independent individuals and had been served, face to face, by local mentors. During the eighties, our Center for Distance Learning began to grow, corporate programs were initiated, working with groups of students became a more legitimate and valued practice, and international options expanded. By the nineties, it was clear that, although we all responded to the needs of adult learners in what would be considered "non-traditional" ways, mentors across the college (some, who might be sitting only feet from each other) were working in radically different environments. This diversification added another layer of complexity to the business of orienting new faculty. It clearly reinforced the tendency toward localization.

During the eighties, the pioneering generation of mentors was joined by a new group. These people entered a relatively established institution complete with written rules and regulations. We were no longer making it up as we went along. Thus, new mentor orientation was more likely to focus on "how it's done" than on creative ways to do it. The pioneers were interspersed with new people who joined not an experiment-in-the-making, but an established institution.

In the early nineties, Empire State's faculty, with modest support from the administration, created the Mentoring Institute. Initially supported by two part time mentor reassignments, the institute saw itself as an organization "for mentors and by mentors," committed to reflecting on and better understanding the philosophy of student centered learning and good mentoring practice. It published *All About Mentoring*, an in-house newsletter devoted to the sharing of mentoring strategies and lore. It also organized workshops and conversations around the college and worked to revitalize the concept of mentoring as a meaningful professional vocation. By the late nineties, the institute (with important financial support from the college's Foundation) boasted a nearly-full-time director, and *All About Mentoring* had sharply increased its size, begun to incorporate contributions from outside the college, and become something closer to a "journal" than a "newsletter." And too, by this time, the institute's concern with mentor orientation and training had become a central concern of the college's administration.

In the midst of these institutional changes, the technology we worked with was also transformed, so that what we realized would become the almost infinite task of print-based up-dating became an obvious anachronism. When we next revisited the issue of new mentor orientation, the World Wide Web was bound to play a central role. But it took a while to clarify what, exactly, that role would be.

A challenge and an opportunity

Historically, ESC's mentoring community had been quite diverse and very dispersed, but integrating new members seemed to represent a quite modest and manageable challenge. Every year we added a few new full-time faculty, and there were plenty of experienced mentors available to see to and quite interested in the socialization of each recruit. While the details of the process varied substantially across the college, the scale of the problem was quite limited.

By the turn of the century, it was becoming clear that we were confronted with a much more substantial and complex challenge. For example, between January 2000 and May

2002, 8 senior mentors with an average tenure in the college of 26 years retired. Of 122 mentors in tenure track positions, 35, or 29%, had been with the college for 25 years or more. Fifty-two, or 43%, had been with us 20 years or more. This data suggests that we are likely to face the retirement of between 1/3 and 1/2 of our senior faculty within the next decade. While the tendency of mentors confronted with a withering retirement portfolio might delay retirement somewhat, another reality, that we routinely hire "new" mentors already well into middle age, might actually tend to increase the number of colleagues facing the decision. Overall, there seems little doubt that we are currently, and for a good number of years will be, dealing with a challenge--and an opportunity--that will transform the college.

The prospect of losing those who are, in effect, the pioneering generation challenges Empire State College on several levels. Most obviously, the college will have to replace them, and draw those replacements into our community. On another level, we are confronted with the loss of all of those accumulated years of experience and institutional knowledge. There is so much about the textures, the nuances, the very work of mentoring that has never been written down, and with these massive retirements, we can be at risk of losing it all. Inherent in this sense of potential loss lies another level of challenge that is not always clearly articulated. It involves Empire State College's identity. Among the pioneering generation, trying to focus on the "whole student" and on his/her distinctive learning experience was an authentic core value. For some, every new technology, every step in the direction of rationalizing the processes of the college, and every move toward a more "efficient" engagement with students was perceived as a potential threat to our ability to meet each student where he/she was and to help that student get where he/she wanted to go. While the second generation of mentors might see decisions about standardizing the length of enrollment periods, or increasing reliance on pre-set distance learning studies, or relying more heavily on "curricular guidelines" as sensible adjustments designed to make the work of the college more manageable to mentors and more understandable to students, many first generation see it differently. For these pioneers, each minute adjustment has been another step down the slippery slope toward conventionality--toward semesters, courses, and curriculum committees. In this context, the transition we face in the early twenty-first century is not only about the socialization of new faculty; it is about the status of all of the hard won victories of the pioneers and about the core values and understandings of teaching and learning upon which they were based.

At the same time, this transition is an opportunity. If we are able to capture and retain at least some of the wisdom and truly "experiential learning" of the pioneer generation, we will be poised to meld it with a new set of skills and competencies brought to us by a new generation of mentors. For example, a new generation of faculty mentors can imaginatively engage with the technology, so alien to many of us. So too, they can be better positioned than any of us ever were to respond creatively to the learning possibilities of the web. Indeed, they might find ways to renew institutional attention to individualization and experimentation using new forms of teaching and learning.

And then there is also the broader context. In our cooler-headed moments, we have seen that although the average age of our students hasn't significantly changed over three decades, other things have. After all, a 38-year old student in 1980 had been born in the midst of World War II and might have been 21 when John F. Kennedy died. A 38-year old in 2001 had been born the year Kennedy died. Some things change while in the act of staying the same. What does continuity and change mean in such a context? What does an institution value and how is this not only communicated to new members of a community, but how do they share in the very creation of those values and practices? What do we want to sustain? How do we do it?

A Strategy for Orientation and Integration in a Changing Community

In response to Empire State College's demographic transition and its effort to try to tackle the kinds of questions included above, the Mentoring Institute has developed a strategy with several dimensions. While Mentorsite (our web-based "handbook" described more fully below) is at its heart, we want to emphasize that there is much more to it than that. We do not see Mentorsite as a silver bullet, but rather as the hub of a wheel. These are its spokes:

New Mentor Workshops

The Mentoring Institute will provide two-day workshops for all new faculty and administrators every fall. Designed and delivered by mentors, these interactive workshops will cover the fundamentals of mentoring: the world of the adult learner; creating, implementing and evaluating learning contracts; educational planning and the assessment of prior experiential learning; and academic and professional development within the college. They will also introduce new colleagues to support personnel in our main administrative offices (in Saratoga Springs) and to the academic and administrative computer systems now so vital to the work of the entire institution. We also anticipate providing New Mentor Workshops regionally, at times most convenient especially to new part-time mentors. (Indeed, the issue of how to best welcome and include part-time mentors in the college community is a critical one, especially as ESC, like other institutions, depends so heavily on the important work of part-time colleagues who are often excluded from important "development" activities.)

Orientation by Areas of Study

Areas of Study are Empire State College's equivalent of departments. There are eleven of them, and every mentor belongs to one or more. Members of Area of Study groups meet two or more times a year and carry on much of their business via e-mail. Every regional center includes at least one mentor from each Area of Study, and every new mentor joins an AOS when hired. In the past, Areas of Study have played only an informal role in the orientation of new mentors. The Mentoring Institute is now proposing a more formal one. We've suggested that the AOS assign a "mentor buddy" to each new mentor who joins its ranks. The buddy would be from a regional center other than the new mentor's, and would contact the new mentor just after she or he arrives. The AOS buddy's primary job is to introduce the new mentor to the workings of the AOS, its members and its web site. And, given the relative isolation of any mentor from colleagues in his/her "field," the buddy can be expected to offer the new mentor a first connection to conversation about students, resources and approaches to mentoring.

The Area of Study web sites, currently in various stages of construction, should provide vital services for new mentors. In addition to containing all of the college's formal information about the AOS, the sites will include profiles of students, sample degree programs and learning contracts, discussions regarding the identification and evaluation of prior learning in the field, and links to other web sites of interest to the field. These sites will be open to both students and faculty, and will also include opportunities for students to connect with each other and for both students and mentors to ask questions of experts in sub-fields within the discipline. Although these AOS web sites were not originally conceived of as a component of new mentor training, our expectation is that they will play a vital role.

Orientation at the Center and Unit Level

We have always understood that, no matter what happens centrally, the orientation of new mentors succeeds or fails at the local level—that is, in regional centers, in even smaller units, and/or in specialized programs (like ESC's masters program, or the international program, or the Verizon Corporate College). That is, in the end, where mentors *really* learn the job. Formally, new mentor training is managed by regional deans, assisted by local staff and unit secretaries. For example, new mentors learn a great deal from attending the meetings of local committees charged with the formal approval of students' individualized degree programs. They are introduced to the business of the college in monthly (or bi-monthly) faculty meetings.

Still, within the centers and units, mentors learn primarily from other mentors. They wander down the hall with a question, or connect with a colleague by phone or e-mail to sort out an obscure point concerning a college policy. They seek answers to myriad questions about their students from whoever happens to be available at the time. And, to a terrific extent, they learn from their students. New mentors working with experienced students find themselves in an authentic adult learning experience, where knowledge or even knowing the right question to ask, brings with it a great deal of authority. In many ways, the on-going collaborations between faculty and student--the very work of mentoring-- are a source of a great deal of new mentor learning.

What we have had to recognize is that the college is such a complex place (with multiple programs and the policies and procedures that flow from each), and the mentor's job so multi-faceted (from tutor to evaluator to advisor to facilitator to administrator to scholar to state employee), that no formal training program can possibly capture every element of it. Even if we could imagine "delivering" all of what needs to be known and thought about in one massive training session, no mentor could retain it. In the end, an in-depth understanding of mentoring as a distinctive way of thinking and working is acquired on the job, over time, and in on-going consultation with colleagues.

The problem here is that more experienced mentors are busy, and new ones know it and are hesitant to "interrupt." Some of us welcome questions from colleagues; others don't. Much, too much, depends on local environmental factors. The original *Mentor Handbook* was designed to supplement and support this vital if haphazard process. Mentorsite, we hope, will accomplish the same end, and much more.

Mentorsite

Mentorsite, currently under development by the Mentoring Institute, is designed both as a rich source of information and support, and as a working space for mentors. When completed, it will provide every mentor in the college access to detailed descriptive commentary on every aspect of mentoring. It will integrate links to materials and databases necessary for the creation of student documents from initial enrollment through graduation. It will also ease communication with colleagues within the Areas of Study and consultants from the Mentoring Institute.

Mentorsite began as an effort to capture the content of the *Mentors Handbook* on line. After devoting substantial time and effort to this initial phase, the Mentoring Institute team shifted its approach to one built around what we have begun to think of as "A Taxonomy of Mentoring." This model, in contrast to the narrative approach which typified the print version of our *Handbook*, begins with a detailed outline of each component of a mentor's "job," from orienting new students through initiating their review for graduation. It is evolving not as a text transferred to the web but as a full-fledged web environment. It will include links to formal college policies as well as Area of Study and Regional Center web pages. It will enable a mentor to create a learning contract and enroll a student in a distance learning course. It will enable newly hired mentors to ask questions directly of mentors within their own Area of Study or seek guidance from a specialist in a field unfamiliar to them. It will explain the more arcane aspects of travel reimbursements and provide access to the forms necessary to initiate that process. It will offer new mentors a map of the mentoring terrain as well as the kind of detail ignorance of which stumps even the most experienced faculty member.

We realized, early-on in the process of creating Mentorsite, that it would not be enough simply to provide a home for descriptive material and a link to "rules and regulations." This kind of archival approach could have some theoretical and historical value, but it simply would not attract busy faculty. It would not provide the real access mentors need. To be used rather than useful, Mentorsite had to be conceived of as a working environment, in which mentors could actually get things done. This approach can best be illustrated through an example:

A new mentor faces the prospect of developing an individual tutorial with a student and need to write a learning contract. She wants to know how to go about it. A keyword search of Mentorsite will get her to a page from which she can move in one of several directions:

- She'll be able to review a discussion of working with a student through the process of defining what topics will be studied in the contract and what learning modes might be employed.
- She'll be able to link to learning contract databases in every Area of Study to see how other mentors from around the college have worked with students on that topic.
- She'll be provided with access to materials from Empire State College's Center for Distance Learning where she'll find course descriptions, book lists, and materials order forms should she and her student wish to make use of that option.
- She'll find a connection to DistanceLearn.com and Fathom.com to search for other pre-packaged courses available across the country.
- If she's looking for books to buy or book reviews to help she and her student in the selection of materials to explore, she'll find appropriate weblinks.
- When mentor and student are ready, she'll be able to "pull up" and fill out an enrollment form for the student and will be able to create an individualized learning contract.
- In the not-too-distant future, she and her student will be able to order books on line, check the student's financial aid status, and arrange for the payment of tuition.
- And, while she's sitting with the student, she will be able to check the status of every other study for which the student has been enrolled and continue to work on the student's emerging "degree program plan."

At every step of the way, Mentorsite will also allow the mentor to address queries to experienced faculty within any Area of Study, to seek tutorial support for individualized studies through a search of the college's directory of mentoring interests, and to make connections with college offices from which help or advise could be needed.

Mentorsite will also serve as an archive for the important "lore" of mentoring. Every issue of the Mentoring Institute's journal, *All About Mentoring*, will be available and searchable on line. Extended interviews with retiring mentors will be collected by the Institute and stored on Mentorsite. Links to national and international websites devoted to the concerns and interests of adult and non-traditional educators and students will be available. And a calendar of upcoming conferences complete with links to information regarding proposal submission will encourage new and experienced mentors to join the larger-world's conversation about all aspects of adult and independent learning.

In addition to discovering what has already been done, our new mentor will be able to contribute to ongoing discussions of what might be done in the future. Mentorsite will host conversations about every aspect of mentoring, enabling each generation of mentors to contribute to the evolution of mentoring as a discipline.

Much of mentorsite will also be open to a wider public, giving any interested person access to a detailed but accessible portrait of life within the college.

An Ongoing Process

Mentorsite is still very much "Under Construction." As we have thought through what this tool might do for both new and experienced mentors, the true dimensions of the task with which we are confronted has become increasingly evident. Empire State College's administration has provided the Mentoring Institute with increased support to move this and other projects forward, and that has helped us get Mentorsite off the ground. But it is clear that as the project evolves, we will need help from every branch of the college and from every administrative office. While some dimensions of the site development will simply require the creation of links to pre-existing databases, others will require the expansion of existing sites, the re-orientation of sites developed with one audience in mind to serve others, or the creation of a range of materials that have just never existed. It is also evident that Mentorsite, like any other tool of faculty training and development, will inevitably have its political dimensions. The truth is that although mentors across the college share commitments to serving adult learners in non-traditional ways and to experimenting with new approaches, we vary sharply in how we go about achieving those goals. Mentorsite will have to walk a fine line between acknowledging the diversity of practices across a geographically dispersed and pedagogically complex institution and providing new mentors with a clear picture of how to get things done. Thus, we now imagine that within the basic design of Mentorsite, every distinct program in the college will have its own access points, giving its advocates an opportunity to detail the unique aspects of their program. Yet, short of developing an entirely separate site for each program, we're bound to encounter tensions between the simplicity and clarity site developers aspire to and the diversity and complexity which characterize the college in those many places where students and mentors meet. Thus, in an important and rich way--a way we want to promote because it is at the heart of Empire State College--the questions about what we do, and how and why we do them will remain alive.

We look forward to sharing our experience at the Adult Higher Education ALLIANCE 2002 Conference. We are also confident that others confronted with similar challenges will help us to improve the quality of the projects on which we will continue to work.

Hybrid Distance Learning Format – A Great Fit for the Small Liberal Arts College

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Background

Overview

Perhaps one of the biggest challenges facing any institution is its ability to make adjustments compatible with student needs. This is especially true when it seeks to expand its involvement with adult learners while trying to reconcile the dramatic changes that already characterize the academy of the twenty-first century. As Chaffee (1998) indicated in "Listening to The People We Serve:"

We need to know our customers in considerable detail, including who they are, why they are here, their expectations of us, what kind of problems they have, where they turn to when they have problems, and what and how well they are learning. We need to understand the diverse types of students the institution attracts. We need to know their critical requirements of us (p. 31).

She also notes:

Older students, however, are increasingly aware of and vocal about their expectations. To the extent that this orientation comes to prevail, institutions that take little interest in student expectations do so at their own peril. If we do not meet student expectations, someone else will (p. 24).

Today, more than ever before, students seeking educational options among institutions of higher learning tend to rely on three variables – responsiveness, flexibility, and convenience – as the most desirable characteristics. For instance, in a competitive market, schools seeking to expand their adult enrollment have quickly learned that one of the best strategies to achieve this expansion is to be flexible, sensitive to those issues that comprise convenience for adult learners and quickly responsive to their needs.

Although it's not the only option, offering some form of distance learning is at the very heart of how to capture these characteristics. However, there are a wide range of choices associated with distance learning, so that each institution must first determine: a) whether it seeks to offer any form of distance learning; b) if so, to what degree; and c) what are the institutional limitations or restrictions? Obtaining clear answers to these issues can only be achieved by getting to the core of institutional mission and identity, since the underlying questions implied are: a) Who are we? and b) Which students do we wish to serve – and how?

The Academy in the Twenty-first Century

As the academy enters the twenty-first century, it is probably facing its greatest challenge; transformation in response to a series of demands and challenges that, typically were unconceivable even a few short years ago (Bash, 2001, November). To some degree, in the new knowledge-based society that defines the twenty first century, every campus is undergoing some aspects of profound and tumultuous change at this time. According to Herr (2001, Winter) in her article, "Survival in the New Marketplace:"

> Of the many forces altering the higher education industry, the following stand out as drivers of change:
>
> - a radical shift in the type of student and the sort of higher education desired;
> - an acceleration in the rate of knowledge accumulation that places a premium on lifetime education rather than a one time undergraduate degree;
> - increased demand for adult education and training;
> - the adoption of new technologies;
> - new web-based sources of information;
> - evolution of the role of student as customer, teacher as content-provider and the institution as a business (for-profit or not-for-profit); and
> - a restrained economy bordering on recession, which may drive more college graduates to stay in school or head for graduate programs (pp. 11-12).

Regardless of whether a college or university is prepared to offer some form of distance learning in the twenty-first century, the practice is already ubiquitous throughout the academy. According to the University Continuing Education Association (2002), "the International Data Corporation predicts that by 2005, 90 percent of all higher education institutions will have e-learning programs" (p. 71). On the other hand, "Even if e-learning fails to reach the optimistic goals of its proponents, the entrepreneurial attitude will have changed the landscape," (Herr, 2001, Winter, p. 11).

Therefore, the central role of new technologies being adopted on the campus may serve as a primary catalyst for the twenty-first century academy. King (2002, Spring), in her research concerning the changes faculty in adult programs experienced by using technology in their teaching and learning, revealed that:

> Learning and using educational technology is a prime occasion for faculty to reflect on their practice, ask hard questions, and step aside from familiar and comfortable teaching and learning paradigms. As faculty learn technology, many of them begin to recast their concepts and practices of educational processes. While educational organizations are pressed to integrate technology, it is evident that they may also be able to experience educational change and perhaps develop a seedbed for educational reform (p. 35).

This confirms a position held by Altschuler & McClure (2002, January 18) who noted the need for a comprehensive technology plan based on three elements: a) helping faculty members to use technology to redesign their courses and create new ones, b) incorporating technology in their classrooms, and c) improving the infrastructure throughout the institution. As they indicate: "A plan should first consider how to make faculty members aware of the new pedagogical possibilities available through technology" (B16).

Baldwin-Wallace College

Baldwin-Wallace College (B-W) is a liberal arts college located outside Cleveland, Ohio. It has offered degrees for adult learners since the mid-1940s. During its long history, the Division of Lifelong Learning (LL) has often been cited by national adult organizations for its record of outstanding practices. In late 1998, after having assessed the viability of the program through an external consultant, the B-W administration decided to strengthen its commitment to the adult learner population by bringing in fresh leadership with a mandate for positive change. Initially, the change focused on providing better services (Bash & Martyn, 2000), curricular and format initiatives, and environmental issues.

Since 1999, B-W has begun to create a new strategic plan, is in the formative stages of curricular reform, and is just initiating a capital campaign as a result of two years devoted to campus planning. Furthermore, due to a change from the quarter system to semesters, more than 50 percent of the faculty members have been at B-W less than five years. Given this environment, approximately two years ago, LL began developing a distance learning component, primarily designed for their adult learner enrollment. This initiative was based on the assumption that the campus would inevitably be moving toward a greater use of technology. However, as the division made various presentations to constituents, it learned that B-W was reluctant to make a full commitment to the adoption of new technologies at this time. It was under these circumstances that the hybrid distance learning format was selected.

Hybrid Distance Learning Format (HDLF)

The model used at B-W was developed two years ago, in response to a variety of requests from adult non-traditional students. Two professors indicated their willingness to transform their traditional face-to-face courses to online courses, understanding that the two delivery methods were very different and that courses needed to be significantly adapted to be successful in the online environment. Both courses piloted the model and were evaluated before receiving final approval from the Curriculum Committee.

The model was designed with a learner-centered approach. This enabled all stakeholders (instructor and fellow students), as well as the instructional elements to impact the student. The hybrid model contains the critical component of the initial class being a face-to-face meeting of students and instructor.

First Class: Face-to-Face

During this three to four hour session, students are introduced to the course management software (*Blackboard*) that will be used as part of the course. The instructor of the course usually provides pizza or doughnuts so that the class members have the opportunity to socialize a bit and start to build community. The outline of the course, learning outcomes, assessments and projects are also covered. Instructors take this opportunity to stress that taking an online course is not easier, only more convenient. The students are also given the opportunity to practice an online assessment (quiz) so that when the time comes to take a real one, some of the anxiety is alleviated. LL at B-W believes that building a sense of community in this first face-to-face meeting has been responsible for a completion rate of almost 100% in the hybrid online courses.

The software has all of the features required for interactivity including the ability to post course content material, instructional links to other resources on the Internet, online assessments, and computer-mediated communication (CMC) tools. These tools include email, synchronous chat, and asynchronous online threaded discussion (OTD) tools. The students are given the opportunity to use each tool through the hands-on practice of sending the instructor and other students email, posting a new thread to the online discussion board and replying with a good quality post, and participating in a chat. Feedback from the students indicates that this hands-on practice is critical to their success. The students are also given Task-Aids and quick tip sheets to take home with them, and are shown where in the software they can download course materials once they leave.

In the ten hybrid courses offered at B-W, only 1 student has not completed a course. Retention has continued to be an issue in many distance learning programs, but personal touch and ongoing technical support was shown to have a positive impact in one program (Chandler, 2001). Student feedback on this initial face-to-face class has been extremely favorable. A student reports, "I was very apprehensive about taking an online class, but after this orientation, I feel ready to go!" Another student response indicates a similar sentiment: "I was afraid that I didn't have the computer skills necessary to be successful, but after practicing the chat and email functions I feel a lot better."

Email

Both instructors and students use email on a regular basis to interact. The *Blackboard* course management system has an internal email function that allows faculty and students to email the entire group or selected members. This feature is used constantly throughout the class by both faculty and students. Students have indicated that this is one of their favorite features of the *Blackboard* software. Whereas traditional students' email accounts can often be found on the campus web page, non-traditional adult students often use an alternative email from their workplace. Communication can often be difficult, but in *Blackboard*, the student simply goes into the email area and email the entire class, just the instructor, or selected members.

Chat

Each week, the students participate in a one to two hour synchronous chat with the instructor to clarify course concepts. This constructive, interactive exchange of ideas has been dubbed "the missing link in online instruction" because the instructor engages students through posing thought-provoking questions (Roberson & Klotz, 2001). To prepare for the chats, the students are expected to read the text, review a chat outline, and take an online quiz. These preparations are important to ensure that the chat time is utilized efficiently, and therefore, it motivates the student to stay current. Several practices have been implemented based on lessons learned. For example, the instructor types in all capital letters. Netiquette (i.e., proper etiquette on the Web) would normally indicate that typing in capital letters denotes yelling, but this procedure helps students follow the instructor's questions more easily. When responding to a question, a student can indicate that they still need more time by typing "…" which lets the instructor and other students know to wait before continuing with another question or response. To use time efficiently, the instructors will often ask several students to start preparing answers and then call on each in order. Parentheses ( ) are used for side conversations. While one student is answering, the instructor can talk to another student by indicating (Tom you are his follow-up). The chats can also be archived, downloaded, and printed at a later time. Students earn points for participating in the chat and for being prepared. The faculty members developed a way to maintain organization, yet enable very active participation during the chat time.

Online Quizzes

Weekly online quizzes provide the opportunity for students to test their understanding of the material and also an incentive to stay current with the reading assignments. The online assessments are timed and are set up so the student can only take each quiz once. The student is given both instant feedback regarding those questions answered incorrectly, and correct responses. This immediate feedback enables the student to review difficult material before the chat begins. Another option is to allow the student to take the online quiz several times. Research has shown that this process is perceived by students to be very helpful (Coates & Humphreys, 2001).

Online Threaded Discussion

The asynchronous discussion board offers students the ability to post technical questions, ask content-oriented questions, clarify assignments and build community. Some threads continue throughout the course (technical issues), while others begin and end weekly targeted specifically at course content. Intricate or challenging concepts, which were problematic for students in past classes, can be highlighted with example. Requiring students to post their own examples helps the instructor to ensure that students understand the material and are ready to progress in the course. A minimum number of posts are required for each student to earn discussion points. Only good quality posts that show careful thought earn points.

Students' feedback to the discussion threads has been extremely positive. A student states, "When I first learned I had to post, I saw it as another pain in the neck – now I'm addicted! I go on every day to see what people are writing." It is common to have over 100 posts per week in a class of 15 students. The posts allow students to apply course material to their own work situations, and also to find current situations in the news that relate to course content.

Last Class: Face-to-Face

The students come to campus one more time to take the final exam. The issue of testing online and ensuring that the actual student is taking the exam has been a concern for administrators and faculty, and is a point for evaluation in an accreditation review (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 2002). Along with addressing this concern, this last class provides an opportunity for closure. Students can see the faculty member one more time to settle any issues or solve problems. The class also provides a logistical benefit in that it allows the instructor to return any projects or assignments that could not be returned electronically. The other benefit is that some students may feel more comfortable giving feedback or asking questions face-to-face. This meeting gives those students one more opportunity to do so.

Quality Indicators

From the formative stages of this project, LL at B-W was concerned about quality assurance for the proposed HDLF system. In order to determine formalized standards, the division examined a number of established evaluative mechanisms relating, though not restricted, to adult distance learning. The following instruments were assessed to determine their appropriateness for the HDLF at B-W: "*Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education*" (Chickering & Gamson, 1987), "*Quality Assurance in an Era of Accountability*" (UCEA, 2002), "*Principles of Good Practice*" (ACE & The Alliance, 1990), "*Accreditation and Assuring Quality in Distance Learning*" (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 2002), "*Quality On the Line: Benchmarks for Success in Internet-Based Distance Education*" supported by Blackboard and National Education Association (Phipps, & Merisotis, 2000). Although these instruments reflect significant agreement among their indicators, each has some unique aspects that merited further consideration as well. All five instruments are included in Table 1, reflecting both their commonality and differences.

Table 1

Evaluation Mechanisms

Quality Indicator	Chickering & Gamson	UCEA	ACE & The Alliance	Accrediting Organizations	Blackboard & NEA
1	Faculty-student interaction	Student engagement in learning	Mission	Mission	Teaching & learning
2	Student-student interaction	Quality of student knowledge & skills	Program administration	Organizational structure	Course structure
3	Active learning	Technology & information resources	Student services	Institutional resources	Institutional support
4	Prompt feedback	Curriculum	Program evaluation	Curriculum & instruction	Course development
5	Emphasizes time on task	Quality of faculty knowledge & skills	Personnel (faculty & administration)	Faculty support	Faculty support
6	Communicates high expectations	Faculty-student interaction	Learning experiences	Student support	Student support
7	Respects diverse talents and ways of learning	Assessment & feedback	Learning outcomes & student learning	Student learning outcomes	Evaluation & assessment

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Evaluation

Evaluation provides the mechanism for analysis and improvement. The HDLF was a new delivery strategy for Baldwin-Wallace College and needed to be assessed for effectiveness to help address concerns expressed by the Curriculum Committee and Faculty Council. Initially, "home-grown" surveys were administered to faculty and students who participated. The purpose of the survey was to glean information from the people who had actively participated in the process. Results from both populations are provided below.

Faculty

The survey given to course instructors asked if he or she would recommend doing a hybrid distance-learning course to other faculty members, and if he or she had experienced any problems with the delivery model. Additional questions related to a comparison of time between HDLP and face-to-face class and the level of satisfaction regarding the amount of professional development and support. The survey also requested suggestions for improving the format, and the students had been adequately prepared to take the hybrid course.

Students

The first group of students who participated in the HDLF was asked to complete a survey developed by one of the professors who taught the HDLF course. The survey consisted of two sections:15 questions focused on the course and instruction in general, the next 15 questions targeted the online experience. The questions solicited information about the technical issues, the online chat, the online threaded discussion board, and the faculty-student interaction. It was determined that, although the survey produced informative feedback, the evaluation instrument still needed improvement.

Current Student Inventory (Flashlight Program)

In 2001, the college purchased the Current Student Inventory (CSI) package from the Flashlight Program, which is sponsored by Teaching and Learning with Technology (TLT) group. The package includes questions that specifically target student perceptions, faculty perceptions, and instructional design. Another group of questions deals with how various teaching and learning practices are helped or hindered by the use of a particular technology. There are 256 items to choose from in this area. Other areas include questions pertaining to self-reported learning outcomes, and student demographic information.

The next group that participated in a HDLF course was asked to complete a new survey comprised of 70 questions from various categories of the CSI. Although the survey provided exciting feedback, the students also indicated that a 70-question instrument was quite an imposition. The evaluation instrument needed to focus on a single topic at a time, and then after assessing and improving that area, move on.

Lessons Learned

There were five major lessons learned though implementing the HDLF:

1. Value of course management software
2. Need for faculty professional development
3. Spreading the word to other interested faculty members
4. Value of CSI from the Flashlight evaluation instrument
5. Value of faculty and student feedback for areas of improvement

The course management software (*Blackboard*) provided the structure in which the entire course was delivered and was found to be user-friendly by both faculty and students. Familiarization with all of the software's capabilities was cited as one of the primary challenges of faculty when teaching distance learning courses. Once faculty understood how teaching in the HDLF differed from traditional face-to-face courses, they were more willing to participate. Thus, faculty development may prove to be the key issue in the success and expansion of the program. Successful faculty members spread the word to colleagues and can be mentors to others. The CSI evaluation instrument from Flashlight included a variety of questions that produced information about the impact of the HDLF on faculty and student perceptions, student learning outcomes, and instructional design. Using the feedback from the survey, the HDLF can be adapted and improved.

What we have done is a preliminary simplistic implementation of the HDLF. It poses some interesting questions about how the model might be manipulated by other institutions to fit their unique distance learning market niche or institutional mission.

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SECTION IV

Communities of Learners Track

Fostering a Community of Learners in a Corporate-College Setting: Experiences from the Field

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This paper is a compendium of perspectives, from four SUNY Empire State College faculty at the corporate-sponsored Verizon Corporate/College Program (C/CP). It features insights on how adults at a singular organization may be fostered into a community of learners, from academics in the disciplines of the social sciences, mathematics, writing, and business.

A Social Sciences Perspective

An interesting and relatively unique aspect of the Verizon Corporate/College Program is that it is located within a corporate setting. More than ten years ago, SUNY Empire State College was hired by a Fortune 500 Company to provide on-site instruction and advisement to allow their workers to obtain associate and bachelor's degrees. Our corporate client is a major telecommunications company, and the bulk of our students, at least until recently, were customer service representatives. These "reps" are primarily women, and their ethnicity is majority African-American, with some Hispanic and relatively fewer Caucasian women. While there were some male students in the Program, they were in the minority until recently, when the Company decided to open up the Program to all workers who occupied a "craft" or non-management position.

Verizon chose our particular college because of its unique educational model, which includes the concept of experiential learning, personalized counseling (i.e., "mentoring"), credit by evaluation, individualized degree programs, and on-site instruction. SUNY Empire State College validates this kind of lifelong learning through credit by evaluation and through the design of appropriate degree programs, which affirm these training experiences as sources of learning. Since our students have received extensive training as part of their work, our college was viewed as an ideal partner to work with this particular student population. In fact, our Program of mentoring one-on-one and offering small group and independent studies offers many of these students their only realistic opportunity to obtain a college degree.

The Verizon Corporate/College Program has provided a chance for these adult learners to return to school. Still, the workplace has a profound impact on their experience of and ability to engage in academic studies. For example, it is said that the adult learner is often motivated to return to school because of larger life transitions. As Kevin Quinlan and Kate O'Brodovich (1996, December) have noted: "For many adults, further education often represents a stepping stone from one life transition to another along the career development path and in the pursuit of lifelong learning. Given the focus of vocational education on preparation for work, adult learner entry fits directly into the scheme of a career transition: and, given the interaction between career and other life roles, career transition may be part of a broader life transition such as coping with a destabilizing event and the ensuing need to reestablish a career."

Though in this framework the authors are speaking about vocational education, the notion that adult learners are motivated to return to school as part of a larger effort towards a career transition does hold direct relevance for our work. A primary motivation we have seen among our adult students returning to school is that they are both frustrated with their current employment and are also anxious that they may be laid off in the near future. Thus, these corporate employees are looking to return to school as a means toward helping them make a larger transition to another job. Alternatively, there is also the motivation to stay within their Company, but to have more mobility to take another kind of position within the Company. In either case, the role of work and the desire to make some kind of career transition seem to be determining factors in their decision to return to school.

A secondary motive lies in the concept of lifelong learning, and the adult learners' desire to complete what they had begun much earlier in their lives, before economic necessity forced them into the workforce. In these cases, the workplace was once viewed as a necessity, but frustrations at work, combined with family responsibilities, had prevented them from returning to school earlier in their lives.

Work, then, takes up an enormous amount of psychic space for C/CP students. It is that place which has provided economic security and the means to a decent living standard for these adult learners, many of whom have roots in the inner city. At the same time, the job has taken up so much time and energy that, along with family responsibilities, it has prevented these adult learners from returning to school earlier. That, combined with the intensive work schedule and the fear that their jobs are no longer secure, creates a difficult set of conditions for students to successfully engage in their academic studies.

In fact, the conditions of the workplace itself have become both a source of intensive frustration, as well as a potential detriment to engaging with their studies. For example, many scholars on the new workplace have explored the impact of the new economy on workers. In *The Future of Success* (2001) Robert Reich notes that the intense pressure companies now feel to produce the "bottom line," have resulted in a speeded-up workplace, worker "burnout" and tremendous anxiety about loss of jobs. And a recent study, published by the Families and Work Institute, found that nine out of ten employees who they interviewed agreed somewhat or strongly with the experience of one or more of these pressures at work: "my job requires that I work very fast; my job requires that I work very hard; or I never have enough time to get everything done on my job." (Galinsky, Kim, & Bond, 2001) In the case of C/CP students, their job as customer service representatives includes such stresses as forced overtime, forced change of work schedules, continuous calls they are required to answer, and a much greater pressure to sell new products.

These pressures at work have led to students seeing school as means to improve or change their present work situation; though at the same time it makes it precisely more difficult to successfully complete their studies. It is within the framework of this setting, then, that other means of academic support become absolutely crucial in making the difference between a successful and an unsuccessful academic experience.

Research here, from the viewpoint of the social sciences, focuses on what kinds of supports or relational anchors might our students use to help get them through their academic experience. In thinking about academic success in terms of the notion of relational support, we are taking somewhat of a departure from the literature on adult learning. For, as has been noted by such scholars as Eric Williams (1997), in reviewing the literature on the adult learner, there is oftentimes an intensive focus on the adult learners themselves looked at outside of any kind of social relationships or constraints. Because of this orientation toward the individuals, the studies done on adult learners tend to focus on a psychological framework for understanding how they succeed or fail. Moreover, he notes further that much of the literature on adult female returning students is from the late seventies to the mid-eighties, despite significant economic and social changes since that time. Both the dated nature of the literature and the overabundance of psychological frameworks to the exclusion of other, more sociological orientations indicate that relatively little research being done on contemporary women adult learners viewed as embedded within a network of social relationships and social constraints.

Of special interest in this perspective from the social sciences is how contemporary women are embedded within a wide web of social relationships, including friends, families and co-workers. As well, they are constrained precisely within the social setting of the workplace. They are not "free agents," who can engage in their studies outside of the constraints of their workplace setting. Rather, they are already embedded within a spatial and professional relationship to their workplace, and this shapes their experience of returning to school as an adult learner. Employing a more sociological framework, then, which takes as a given that our students are embedded in these kinds of social networks and constraints, we set out to try and understand what kinds of social support they may receive from their relationships with others to help them get through school.

One preliminary finding of our work with students has shown that significant "others" in the workplace provide a crucial means of support for getting through their academic program. These "others" consist of friends who they work with who serve as cheerleaders, mentors, critics and helpers on an on-going basis as they try to complete their studies. Oftentimes, these co-workers are located geographically within the same "section" of the "floor" on which they work. They form a square of four women who face one another, and can talk to each other over the cubicle wall they have at their desk. Speaking of these "foursquares," and the sources of support they provide, one student comments: "I know that in my little corner, my co-workers support me going back to school by giving me suggestions on different things like the way I worded my term paper, or listening to me if I seem like I'm being overwhelmed. Most importantly, they check up on me to make sure that I'm not slacking off in my studies. They know what I am capable of and they make sure I accomplish that for myself. It helps especially for me because I'm the oldest of the four of us in my group. We are very supportive of each other."

In her view, her co-workers provide all kinds of emotional and practical support. From editing her papers to "checking up" on her, they act as crucial means of support to sustain an engagement with school. Often, the theme of not being able to "go on" or to finish one's studies, comes up in the comments of the students who we studied. Because of pressure at work and other outside responsibilities, school often takes a secondary place to other, more urgent concerns. These women draw on the support of their co-workers when that occurs, which in a sense helps them to re-focus on their academic work. As another student offers: "My experience with my co-workers supporting me while I further my education has been the following: advice on subject matter which are personal or professional; encouragement when I did not feel up to the task at hand; continual checking in on my progress on papers or just checking to see how I am doing. It's like your own little personal study group with more closeness to it. They are the extended family. It made me feel good about myself and what I am trying to accomplish to know someone took an interest to ask about what I am doing, how I am handling school, work and home. I in return do the same for them because I know how it makes me feel."

In fact, most of the women studied have a very strong sense of how they were themselves important in the lives of their other co-workers who were returning to school. They saw themselves as a critical means of social support. This dovetails with Eric William's (1997) finding in his work with Australian women returning to school at a community college that social support was something these women were accustomed to giving to others—such as children, spouses, family and friends—rather than being on the receiving end of support. The fact that the women in our study looked to and received support from the co-workers in their lives served as a very empowering moment in their experience of their workplace. In other words, while the women in our study were used to giving support to others, the fact that they were receiving support in a difficult work environment served as a very enriching and unintended aspect of returning to school. It brought them closer to each other, which in turn transformed their work experience and made it a more habitable social environment.

To summarize, some of the ways in which the women in our study received support from their co-workers included such areas as receiving encouragement; feedback; providing advice as well as sharing experiences and providing practical support. Like the women in William's study, these women received as well as gave, and in so doing, cemented the bonds of friendship in their workplace, which also then served as a means of making work more tolerable.

Some of the conclusions which may be provisionally reached include the idea that as these adult learners return to school, it is critical to do more research on the role which not only co-workers, but friends and extended family might play in providing the kind of emotional support to help students get through school. By opening up our analytical lens to looking beyond the intrinsic motivations of the individual adult learner, a focus on how the learner is embedded within these larger social relationships can offer a window on how to bolster and indeed, foster more of these kinds of relationships.

For example, much of the language used in describing the adult learner focuses on the ways in which adults are supposedly autonomous and self-directed. Malcolm Knowles, the pioneer in the field of adult learning, spoke precisely in these terms. However, in our study of adult female learners in a workplace setting, the notions of autonomy and self-directedness must be seriously questioned. And, from the perspective of recent writings in the field of gender studies, the notion that adults are somehow autonomous and self-directed sounds like a more traditional and male-biased perspective, one that is arguably flawed in light of the real-world experiences of our black, female adult learners trying to go to school and embedded within a whole host of social relationships. It should also be noted in conclusion, that the literature on the black family may also provide potentially fruitful further avenues to explore. For, in the writings of such authors as Carol Stack (1974) in her seminal study *All Our Kin*, as well as more recent writings by Patricia Hill Collins (1999) on black motherhood, both authors speak eloquently to the ways in which the black community has relied on a more open-ended concept of mothering to include an extended kin network, outside friends, and significant "others" to provide a kind of "other mothering" to their children. I raise this notion of "other mothering" in this context to point out that women in the black community have long relied on the help of others in their social network to provide crucial means of economic and emotional support, support which, because of the inequality and poverty in their communities, they were often not able to provide themselves. This point seriously questions the notion that individuals can somehow be understood in isolation from others. Rather, our study has taught us that relational networks may be one of the most important determinants of academic success with our population. In these ways, then, we hope to engage in further study of the ways in which social networks such as these can be themselves supported by larger institutional structures.

A Mathematics Perspective

The adult learner returning to school meets a number of obstacles not usually encountered by the younger undergraduate. Conrad (1993) observes that the older student faces greater anxieties and pressures than does the traditional student. It is admirable when adult students manage to earn a college degree while maintaining a full-time job and raising a family, precisely because it is difficult. However, these obstacles—job, children, and family responsibilities—may, paradoxically, provide support systems for the adult that are unavailable to the younger, more traditional student.

Faculty at many traditional colleges report that some of their best students are returning adults. The results of a study by Harmon and Mathews (1999) at an urban community college found that adult students achieved higher grade-point averages than did younger students. The adult student is more mature and has returned to school to achieve a particular goal. Having made the commitment to attend college, many treat that experience as they would a job.

The effort of going to school increases a student's image of self worth. That image enhances the impetus to continue—partially because of encouragement from a support network of co-workers, family, and friends—but also because of a reluctance to disappoint the people who believe in and admire them.

When considering ways the adult learner is motivated to return to school, it is helpful to think about real world examples of communities of learners that are formed for adults to assist in their transition back into school. Communities of learners may be formed in a variety of settings, with different kinds of social actors who provide support, academic and otherwise, that enable the learner to engage successfully in school. This paper presents one such community, which was formed in a workplace setting where individuals "found" one another through a unique Program that was actually a partnership between a College and a Corporation.

The initial intent of the Verizon Corporate/College Program (C/CP) was to provide a unique college experience in a convenient place, so that employees could go to a school that would not interfere with their work responsibilities. In order to obtain a position at this company, potential workers are tested on their quantitative reasoning and reading skills. Corporate College students, then, are somewhat pre-selected because they have demonstrated a degree of basic literacy and numeracy skills. Studies conducted by Bates and Holton (2000) have shown that employees with these skill levels demonstrate a higher ability to transfer those skills than those who do not.

One unanticipated benefit of this non-traditional model of a college is that the setting itself creates a community of learners by virtue of having a built-in set of co-workers who are simultaneously attending C/CP. Because the employees usually work in large groups, they are accustomed to working together and often help each other to learn new features of their jobs. Since the effort of going to school is often admired at work and co-workers are generally pleased to offer help, it is not unusual to see a community of two or three co-workers working together to solve one student's math problems. Co-workers may be other current students, former Corporate College students, students attending other colleges, or potential students. Imel (1994) would describe this as a form of peer tutoring, which helps students to become independent learners and achieve ownership of their own learning.

A significant percentage of students at Corporate College are single mothers who have made arrangements for child care so that they can hold full-time jobs. It is often difficult for them to extend that coverage to permit them to attend regular classes. They have been able to use C/CP's support system of on-site mentoring, which makes a variety of non-traditional modes of education available to its students. Some of the formats offered are small group studies, independent studies, on-line studies and lunchtime studies that take place where they work. These study formats are enhanced by the existence of informal communities of learners—i.e., their co-workers—who help them maintain focus and work on their assignments.

A portion of our research includes a case study that describes a relatively typical example of the way a community of learners develops.

A case in point is a woman who has worked with the company for more than twenty years. As a team leader, she holds an influential position and her team members admire and respect her. When she heard that a C/CP mentor was coming to her location, she encouraged the members of her team to meet with me and find out more about the college. She urged them to apply to the Verizon Corporate/College Program, to sign up for and attend classes, and to keep up with their studies. She took pride in their accomplishments and was generous with her praise.

The first class those students registered for was a math study. For almost all of them, it was the first math class they had taken for many years. A community of learners developed within the study because the students took the class together and discussed it among themselves at work throughout the week. They exchanged home phone numbers and some of them set up study groups over the weekend. Not only were the registered math students involved in the study activities, other co-workers were consulted and offered advice and assistance, thereby expanding the community of learners to include co-workers outside the class as well.

An interesting sidebar of this story involves that team leader. Like many of her team members, she was a single parent who had made two failed attempts at getting a degree in the past. Because her team knew from their own experience how interested she was in achieving a college education, they took it upon themselves to persuade her to apply to our Program and to take classes. Ultimately, she signed up for and successfully completed a business management study. As is true with other students, her initial success motivated her to continue. She went on to acquire both an Associate's and a Bachelor's Degree. At graduation, she received an outpouring of love and affection from her at-work community of co-supporters.

Another community of learners is made up of fellow students in a math class.

The adult learner who has not been to school for a few years is often fearful about taking courses in mathematics for a number of reasons, including poor early performance, poor schooling, and poor self image. Some of these students state that they were never good at math and/or hate math. Kerka (1995), Lawrence (1988), and others have suggested that a perceived lack of skill may even have kept some students from going on to college after high school.

If knowledge can be defined as "the fact or state of knowing," interesting questions might be "How do you know you know?" and "How do you know you don't know?" Such questions might lead to the conjecture that, while dislike or fear of math are usually reflections of negative experiences in the past, theyt may also be more indicative of a lack of awareness on the student's part of what she or he actually knows rather than what she or he doesn't know.

One dilemma for the educator is how to convince the learner, particularly the adult learner, that formal math is an abstraction of real life problem-solving and strategies. Few successful adults are unaware of the "Math of Life" at work, at home, when shopping, or traveling. As Lawrence (1988) indicates in *Mathematical Myths and Adult Learners*, although most adults regularly use math to solve the problems of everyday life, they are often unaware of the connection between their experiential use of math and the formalities of school-based mathematics. They have the heuristics and the algorithms, but don't know the formal words, the definitions, that would give them the confidence to believe that they "know" math. The challenge for the educator, then, is to connect what the student knows from experience with the formality of math at a college level. This can be achieved by having students work together, thereby forming a community of learners within the classroom.

An important objective of mathematics education for the adult learner should be the student's recognition that everyday experience is a connection between "real life" activities and the abstractions of formal mathematics. Imel (2000) identifies that as contextual learning which, among other things, "emphasizes problem solving; . . . anchors teaching in the diverse life context of students; (and) encourages students to learn from each other." However, when students begin my College Mathematics course, many of them say they dislike math and were never good at it. Typical questions generally include: Why do I need it? When am I ever going to use it? What good is it? The similarity of their reactions to math and the fact that they are all working in the same company help to create a sense of community within the classroom.

A major focus of the math study, then, is to make students aware that their experiences at work and at home have a connection to the mathematics discussed in a classroom. In fact, the vast array of life's daily activities includes an innate understanding and use of mathematics. The instructor's task is to make that obvious to the student. Math in context helps the student make connections between everyday situations and the characteristics of mathematics (Kerka, 1995, Lawrence, 1988). For instance, when asked: How do you know what time to leave your house to make sure you get to work on time? How do you balance your checkbook? How do you budget your household expenses? How much more will you earn if you put in two hours of overtime? All the students can answer the questions.

If students as a group or "community" are encouraged to talk their way through procedures such as calculating overtime, mileage, time, measurement, problems at work, etc., they generally find that they know how to do it but have difficulty abstracting the process they use to do so. The challenge for the teacher is to elicit from them the idea that a general process or "formula" enables them to make their decisions because, although the values of relevant variables change, the process remains constant. As the session unfolds, the connections between their experiences and algebraic formulas become more obvious. Having established the existence of the formula in many of their experiences, inductive reasoning enables the students to observe that are using "Algebra" and mathematical reasoning in their lives on a regular basis.

While much of the study of College Mathematics is allegedly review, it is important that the content be commensurate with the mature life experience of the adult learner. Examples of application problems should include real life situations that are relevant to the life of an adult. It is not sufficient for the student merely to listen and understand in an instructor-student mode, the student must be able to internalize the material. The goal is to achieve "ownership" of algebraic procedures and strategies. To do so, the student must become an active participant in the learning process and not only in a classroom setting. One effective method is the community of learners approach, where both student and partner or partners, acting as peer tutors, endeavor to support each other in the quest for knowledge and understanding (Imel, 1994, Lawrence, 1988).

Adult learners are already sophisticated users of math who need to see the connections between what they do on the job, in their lives, for recreation, etc. and mathematics. The adult student comes to the classroom equipped with a level of realistic math experience lacking in the younger student. Corporate College students work with math all the time and apply sophisticated algorithms regularly, generally without realizing that they are doing so. Having used math and problem-solving skills in the workplace and in life itself, they have learned to work well together in teams, as they do at work, and they have developed a pragmatic understanding about the uses of math.

The family may also play a significant "community" role for the adult student.

Other benefits accrue to the adult learner returning to school. While it is certainly beneficial for the student to have the admiration and support of co-workers, encouragement of family and friends is of great import as well.

Often, the student is the first member of his or her family to go to college and relatives are proud and supportive of their efforts and accomplishments. Not only have these adult learners brought honor to the family, they have become positive role models and potential inspirations for their children and for their relatives.

Assistance comes from family and friends, particularly in a skills course such as math. Inevitably, there are assignments that require a sometimes frustrating degree of problem-solving ability. At that point, students may seek the help of friends and family and work with them in much the same manner as with their co-workers. An activity, by the way, that is in itself an excellent problem-solving strategy.

One of the more intriguing results of that behavior occurs when the student enlists the assistance of his or her own child. Often, the child becomes teacher to the parent. The child is usually proud of the parent for being in college, thrilled at the prospect of helping the parent to solve a math problem, and, most especially, inordinately pleased with himself or herself for knowing enough math to work out a college level problem.

An unintended but beneficial result of the community of learners approach is an added closeness between co-workers, family, and friends. They now have a stake in the successful conclusion of the study as well. Another, possibly more important effect of this endeavor is the positive example set by the adult learner of the value of working at and achieving a college education.

A Writing Workshop Perspective

At one time "community" was defined geographically. Ethnic neighborhoods were identified by shared language and customs, imported from Asia, Europe, or south of the border. Later, "community of place" became more generalized in its demographics. The circumstances particular to suburban life, for instance, paid less attention to its heterogeneity and more to emblems of conformity to a given lifestyle: station wagons, backyard pools, etc. A more recent phenomenon has been the concept of a "reactive" community—one that consists of disparate individuals linked mainly by crisis or debilitation. The impact of AIDS, for example, cuts across all ethnic and economic strata, and yet the network of those who are actively affected by it are deemed a "community." Similarly, it is convenient to speak of a "the" Black or "the" Latino community, even though the reality represented is far more complex.

As a teacher of writing, I find that my adult learners fit this last category. Their unifying factor is mostly a reactive one—a sense of need, frustration, apprehension, and isolation—fueled by the demands of written composition and academic research. Theirs is a history of failure and confusion, of ridicule and boredom. They possess a flickering and skeptical sense of their own skills, and require that the instructor frequently nurture those skills they have. Indeed, they need constantly to have their own skills identified for them, the while disabusing them of other negative baggage they've brought in with them. It therefore is the goal of my writing workshop to refocus a "community" of alienated, separate souls into a community of active, empowered adult writers.

"Community" in the corporate setting adds yet another wrinkle. The dynamics of the workplace impose a code of preferred conduct, based on a set of allegedly common goals prescribed by the corporate employer. In our case, the Verizon Corporate/College Program is a markedly varied liberal arts college financed by a company more sympathetic to the "training" mode of employee modification. Our contractual agreement with Verizon mandates that all instruction take place on corporate premises. Implicitly understood is that school is always second in importance to any business-related priorities of a given moment. Add to this the prospect that it is not *always* advantageous to conduct a workshop with co-workers who occupy the same daytime location. The dramatic daily interplay in the office constitutes a "subset community" every bit as much as the one promoted by the corporation itself.

Schwartz (1996) has devised a definition of community that fits most senses of the term, citing that "our self-interest reflects what we value [and] a sense of community arises [when people] begin to recognize [and] strengthen the [shared values]." This perspective applies as well to the neighborhood, the workplace, the classroom, or the religious cult. The corporation seeks to impose its own priorities as "shared" concerns, and to inspire employees to adopt these values as their own through elaborate selling initiatives and training initiatives. Note Drake's (1984) statement that corporate culture is a "set of values and beliefs shared by people working in an organization which represents employees' collective judgments about the future." This differs sharply from the self-generated community sense that a writing workshop aspires to. Burkhart (1995) has listed the criteria by which a corporate employee achieves a sense of an organization's "community" values: "An organization's culture is determined by: recognizing the company's philosophy (including the company's values/beliefs and quality philosophy); recognizing company-employee relations; appreciating the company's history…; understanding company language; observing the company's dress code; acknowledging the company's environment; reviewing printed materials to determine how the company sees itself; appreciating how the company values and uses time; and identifying career paths and advancement opportunities in the company."

The goals of the writing workshop are the same for corporate workers as for any other adult learner. However, the values and demands of the organization continue to shape what can be taught. Work-related stress is palpable, contributing to student tardiness and delay time in their ability to shift into the active learner mode. Add to this that the majority of our students were not trained in high school to pursue the academic road and, instead, moved directly into the job market. Therefore, the sheer amount of reading, writing, and disciplined study time comes as a shock, not infrequently derailing tenuous college aspirations. It is because of these factors, regarding the corporate-based adult learner, that I prefer the writing workshop method of teaching over that of English Composition.

It is understandable, then, why Peelen (1993) observes that teaching writing at the workplace requires some "deprogramming" of passive worker behavior: "In workplace settings, this has meant a shift to writing exercises that prompt employees who may be accustomed to positions of subordination to make decisions and act independently and creatively," after which she contends that 'grammar may not be a necessary element of adult writing instruction in workplace settings." The writing workshop for corporate adults does concentrate much of its effort on this transition but, purporting to equip such students with college-level skills, it does have an obligation to cover grammar and punctuation as part of that empowerment process.

College administrators want a fifteen-week class to transform weak and wary "cut-and-paste researchers" into masters of the polished rhetorical paragraph with competent research skills in, say, the APA format. The corporation is interested in promoting its image as a supporter of growth in employees, and will be pleased if some of the skills and discipline acquired in this workshop spill over into their workers' daytime product. The adult students themselves hope to acquire enough simple strategies by which their self-perceived lacks and strengths can churn out required assignments with minimum angst. It is this third focus that most corresponds to the methods and goals of the workshop.

The target of "polished writing" urged by the academic community is not realistic. The brunt of the semester's seminars is taken up with disabusing students of their preconceptions and self-directed negativity. The burdensome baggage adult learners bring from the workplace to the workshop must not be underestimated. In an article on apprehensions common to gifted female students, Reis (2002) writes, "Dilemmas relating to family, fear of success, the development of resilience, multi-potentiality, absence of planning, confusion about effort and ability, perfectionism, unreal expectations, and loneliness [have an impact on] internal barriers, priorities, and personal decisions." While Reis singles out these concerns as they relate to a particular group, they can more generally be recognized as isolating worldview that students of both genders bring to the writing workshop. Indeed, "dilemmas relating to the workplace" might be an apt addition to this list. But these items are especially helpful in helping us profile the writing workshop student. While "fear of success" might be unique to Reis's target group, the more negative listings must be acknowledged openly as the real target of instruction in the writing workshop setting. Where Reis cites "absence of planning," we might emphasize the importance of providing structured writing strategies (in note-taking, paragraph structuring, etc.) and providing adequate time for students to grasp and practice these constructs. This is the core of workshop instruction. "Confusion about effort and ability, perfectionism, [and] unreal expectations" are the barriers this strategy-based instruction must dissolve. Adult writers censor themselves relentlessly due to their vague sense of how much effort and skill they must expend, and an onerous sense of "perfect" papers they know they must produce and know they cannot provide. The "loneliness" to which Reis alludes can be seen in the adult writing student as a chasm of isolation, fed by a perceived history of frustration and failure related to writing skills and performance. These collectively are the properties that constitute a "community" defined by its sense of alienation. This is the mindset that the writing workshop must address openly, by creating a safe environment for positive change.

As with a twelve-step counseling program, the first half hour or more of a session involves group sharing. Individuals report their frustrations over the past week, as they attempted to apply note-taking strategies and to build basic paragraphs out of these materials. The activity allows for a review of those strategies as a group-defined oral effort, and exposes misconceptions or celebrates victories in the process. This takes time, and indeed is the central curriculum of the workshop. Rushing ahead to research methods without first dispelling the adult writer's inner demons is as premature as hobbling a toddler with track shoes.

This sense of community, united by confronting the frustrations associated with writing, creates an alternative to the exigencies of the corporate workplace. Active participation in a shared set of goals, based upon acknowledged needs outside that of employment or the academe, establishes an environment in which very basic skills can be explained and strengthened. The "workshop as community" nurtures and sustains, permits opportunities to risk and to cope with not succeeding as part of the process, not as punishment and a portent of future failure. Topic-based readings are minimal, and completed papers are not assigned biweekly. Instead, emphasis remains fixed on a conscious alertness to practicing the skills of note-taking.

Late in the term, the workshop reviews strategies for grammar and punctuation review.

> Ultimately, self-empowerment emerges as a key writing strategy. A departure from the "Borg union" of the organizational community, self-directed learning becomes an overt goal for students to acknowledge and aspire to. Research affirms that the self-directed approach promotes a dual perspective in learners—that they "own" the process via "self-management" and "self-monitoring" of the cognitive learning strategies (Abdullah, 2001).

Students are evaluated at the end of the term by evidence of improvement with personal voice, note-taking strategies by which their own opinions blossom into cogent rhetorical positions, and as much paragraph development as the weeks allow. Tools of measurement include (1) the adult learner's oral review of her/his portfolio of assignments; (2) an end-term self-assessment essay on their preconceptions and outcomes of the workshop; and (3) an in-class feedback form during the last session which has students recount the goals and strategies of the workshop and asks what skills they still want to work on.

While some researchers see the classroom as a place where corporate workers can or should address the ethics and mores of their employers, this is outside the realm of my writing workshop. These adults still have to work with each other during the day, and peers in the workshop will not necessarily be discreet. Furthermore, the community of the workshop is a respite from the perhaps more hollow and harrowing community of the organization. Finally, focus needs to remain on dispelling distracting and destructive misconceptions while supplanting them with positive, productive writing strategies. In the community of the writing workshop, that focus will take all the time we have.

In the end, instruction itself can be seen as an act of community. "Learning consists of sets of valued social practices that depend on prevailing social and economic conditions;... the valued knowledge and skills around which learning occurs are constructed in and by groups as they learn for common purposes" (Falk, 1997). The factors that distinguish the academic, corporate, workshop, and personal views of community, therefore, are what common purposes guide the activity and who determines what those prevailing goals will be.

A Business Studies Perspective

Graduation day at the Verizon Corporate/College Program is a gala affair. It is a reflection of the collaborative effort of students, instructors, relatives, friends and employers. Viewing the various supporters, one could easily call this special event, *The Verizon Corporate/ College Academic Awards Ceremony*. There are grandparents and grandchildren, co-workers and admirers, cheering the graduates as they march in, and it is plain to see the pride everyone feels at such an accomplishment.

It is sad that the average American minority does not acquire a college degree early in life. More often than not, it is not from trying but a result of circumstances such as the lack of a sound education foundation, scholarship or the proper learning environment. Experience has shown that many undereducated employees yearn for a chance to secure a college degree but, burdened with obligations such as children or a spouse who does not understand the need for higher education, they are unable to realize their dream. On the other hand, there is usually a few who try to assimilate into mainstream society and learn as they go along with every day assignments. This dilemma makes one think that if employees demonstrate a desire for learning, then "communities" should make it possible for acquisition of the necessary tools. These communities include corporations as well as co-workers, friends and relatives.

This paper approaches the topic from a mentor's point of view. It asserts that learning is a community affair rather than an isolated effort and students who interact in small peer groups often develop a broader base and better understanding of new learning. The recent upsurge of interest in learning communities gives one cause to investigate the reason and also understand the concept. One may say learning communities offer students a forum for intellectual interaction. K. Patricia Cross (1998, July-August) intimates people are interested in this model because it offers hope of making college a more holistic, integrated learning experience for students. She further states interest falls into three categories: philosophical, research- based, and pragmatic.

Historically, the lecture method has been the predominant approach to instructing adults (How to Teach Adults, 1980). This method, however, does not always result in the desired learning and is being challenged at C/CP. Instead of lectures, students are placed in small study groups and do much of the work themselves, with mentors and tutors guiding them. Study groups tend to form a bond between students allowing them to see the larger picture from various points of view. They are also more involved in thinking, challenging and researching topics and they tend to gain much more than sitting in a lecture and, quite likely, falling asleep. Cross (1998, July-August) further states that students who are involved with the people and activities of learning communities are significantly more likely than their less involved peers to show growth in intellectual interests and values, and apparently more likely to get more out of their college education.

About five years ago I began working as a tutor with the Verizon Corporate/College Program, through which SUNY Empire State College provides a motivating student-oriented environment. Older students find it encouraging that they are made the center of the learning experience. One of the subjects I teach is Small Business Management. Students' ages vary from the mid-twenties to the fifties and one very effective method of eliminating the age disparity is by grouping students by business interests. Older students often possess more knowledge than they are aware of and grouping by venture demonstrates the vast concentration of talents within these groups. One drawback with the older students is their fear of failing. Communal support at such time plays an integral part in helping them realize success rests on each member of the group.

In his book, Kurt Hanks (1991, p. 10) notes that, "Motivation is everybody's problem." This is borne out by "acceptance" speeches at graduation, which are usually dedicated to each student's supporters. There are times when it is difficult not to shed a tear. Each person is surrounded by her community, who in turn nurtures her to success. On one occasion, a graduate wept when she thanked her spouse for being "Mr. Mom," cheerleader, chauffeur and husband. She was grateful and demonstrated that throughout the time spent trying to garner a degree, her spouse understood, was patient and gave her the confidence to believe her efforts were worthwhile.

Hanks (1991) further suggests that people are greatly influenced by their organizations. Verizon has had a major influence on its employees by offering them the financial support to obtain a college degree, and they in turn show their gratitude by being loyal to the company. One of the topics that human resource management addresses is "benefits," and students consistently praise Verizon for offering its employees so much. A majority of the students confess they would never think of leaving the company because its benefits surpass that of many similar corporations.

Individual students have varying stories of how their work places affect their progress. One student reports that on her job she practices strategies picked up in class and that her supervisor is very impressed. She also indicates that in an effort to have this supervisor return to school, she even tries to teach him statistics as she learns it. This is the environment most people need to motivate them to meet academic challenges. A supervisor who supports his employee in such a way should be applauded.

From what has been discussed above, it is quite obvious that the adult student needs a nurturing environment in order to face the challenges of obtaining an education. A nurturing environment is similar to a balanced meal. People learn best when they are comfortable and having someone to watch the children while the "student" is doing a research paper will help eliminate this need. The corporation that provides the means for a student to obtain an education is creating a venue for gratitude and loyalty. Mentors who recognize the immense struggle their mentees face should extend as much encouragement as possible. A mentee may not verbalize his gratitude but the feedback shows in the quality of work that is presented for each study.

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Covey's Habits and Synergetic Learning Community

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Introduction

In his work on adult education, theorist and practitioner Malcolm Knowles (1972) describes the teacher's primary role with adult students to be more as facilitator than expert. He writes, "The teacher helps the students [to] exploit their own experiences as resources for learning . . . [and] to apply new learnings to their experience, and thus to make the learnings more meaningful and integrated" (p. 53). Adults seem to learn best when their experience is brought into the classroom as a resource alongside textbooks and instructor knowledge and when they can see applications of their academic learning to their life. Surely, adult preference does not govern curriculum, but it does influence its delivery and emphasis. As contemporary adult education theorist Stephen Brookfield (1987) points out, the facilitator's role includes the exercise of professional judgment about content and student requirements. Adult education would otherwise become, in Brookfield's words, "one giant department store in which facilitators are providers of whatever learners (consumers) believe will make them happy"(p. 97). But, as he points out, "learner needs and expressions of preference" ought to be factored in (p.97). Indeed, because of the generally acknowledged importance of the experiential component in the theory and practice of adult education, we may infer that in some critical ways specific program content may be subordinate to a larger goal. In the context of Stephen Covey's (1990) *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, we can see how our work with adult learners in fact serves to help them to become *highly* effective people.

This experiential orientation is characteristic of, but not unique to, adult programs in higher education. Influential educational thinkers like John Dewey and Alfred North Whitehead have emphasized the need at all educational levels for a connection between learning and doing. Indeed, Whitehead (1968) speaks of a "marriage of thought to action" and objects that: "The antithesis between a technical and a liberal education is fallacious. . . . [There is] no education which does not impart both technique and intellectual vision" (p. 48). What Covey adds to this pragmatic orientation for education is an emphasis on character development. His is a philosophy of being, one in which productive action emerges from one's developed habits of character and thought. For Covey, achieving effectiveness goes far deeper than the obtaining the ostensible trappings of power, position, and possession. Covey's effective people have a balanced capacity to empower self and others, to think beyond the immediate circumstance.

Covey divides the seven habits into three main categories, habits of private victory, public victory, and renewal. For Covey, the habits of personal victory, *be proactive; begin with the end in mind; put first things first*, are a necessary foundation for effectiveness, but private victory is not an end in itself. Private habits are meant to lead to public victories and to be translated into community benefit. The whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts through the interpersonal habits: *think win/win; seek first to understand, then to be understood; synergize*. Personal and public habits are sustained and fueled by the seventh habit of *sharpen the saw*, the habit of renewal which surrounds and enfolds the other six habits.

In our work with Nyack College's Adult Degree Completion Program, we have observed that many of our students experience their degree completion work as life-changing, even "transformative and emancipatory," to borrow the words of Jack Mezirow and Associates (1991). We have begun to think that this powerful effect has as much to do with the development of the habits of success, as identified by Covey, as it does with the specific areas of knowledge acquired. Thus, we suggest that, if we as educators recognize how what we teach fosters the various habits, we can help our students to place more of their learning into the context of what they value, i.e., personal effectiveness in the real world. For example, our students understand that networking is essential to success. We can communicate to students that self-discipline and interpersonal abilities are connected. A truly important value of their education is the habit of self-discipline they develop, for, in Covey's words, "Real self-respect comes from dominion over self, from true independence. . . . Interdependence is a choice only independent people can make. Unless we are willing to achieve real independence, it's foolish to try to develop human relations skills" (1990, pp. 186-87).

Another value we can communicate that they gain through their education comes through the habits of public victory they acquire or strengthen in the respectful atmosphere of adult education. With a facilitator model of adult education, the opportunities for student input are manifold, and adult students get to influence one another and to affect even the content of their classes. According to Brookfield (1987), adult education is an interactive system affected by both facilitator and learner, as well as by other societal and educational forces. In Brookfield's words, "facilitating learning is a transactional encounter in which learner desires and educator priorities will inevitably interact and influence each other" (1987, p.98). As Covey writes, "Whether you are the president of a company or the janitor, the moment you step from independence into interdependence in any capacity, you step into a leadership role. You are in a position of influencing other people" (1990, p. 206). We can help students to see that the habits of interpersonal communication they exercise during their education are essential for the public victories they hope to experience.

In addition, we can help students see the connection between the habits of reading, writing, and research that they acquire and/or strengthen through their schooling and the habit of renewal that Covey ascribes to highly successful people. In Nyack's Adult Degree Completion Program, with its cohort model, we have found that an effective community of peers can make a crucial difference for adults in the midst of a demanding program. A supportive, dynamic learning community can foster the first six habits, in serving as a resource for knowledge and skills (the habits of private victory) and a training ground for interpersonal skills (the habits of public victory). But perhaps even more importantly, a vital learning community can provide a ready resource for renewal (the seventh habit) to keep overextended students from burning out. The interaction in this community can offer various types of renewal, especially "social/emotional" and "mental" renewal. The more ways the community encourages itself, the more it becomes energized by its synergy, or to use Covey's term, its *synergetic* interaction. He writes, "Balanced renewal is optimally synergetic. The things you do to sharpen the saw in any one dimension have positive impact in other dimensions because they are so highly interrelated" (1990, p. 303).

Thus, in community, as students develop their own habits of independence, they also develop habits of interdependence and habits of renewal. In learning to encourage one another in the interpersonal realm, they enhance their capacities to accomplish the reading, writing, research, and relational richness that may well become lifelong habits of renewal – tools for success now and in the future. In short, they develop the leadership qualities of Covey's highly effective people.

As we briefly share some ways that Nyack College's Adult Degree Completion Program uses and builds community in its program and course design, in the context of Covey's seven habits, we invite you to think about the implications of what we say for your own situation. For while the cohort model adds substantially to the synergetic effect, whether or not your students travel as a cohort through their college studies, as ours do, you can encourage and draw on community within your learning environment, as well as clarify for students how the subject matter at hand relates to personal effectiveness as people via the paradigm of the seven habits.

From Dependence to Independence, Phase I

In community building, there is usually a period of acclimation. In order to facilitate this time of adjustment to new environment and people, the structure of the Adult Degree Completion Program (ADCP) of Nyack is designed with two distinct parts: Phase I, the eight-week introductory part, and Phase II, a fifty-two week sequence that consists of semesters one and two. While Phase II addresses the core credit courses of the program, it is in Phase 1 that the groundwork is established to heighten students' awareness of a new approach to learning and achieving goals based upon Covey's principles. Phase I provides an overview of the program. It is during this section of the program that students are taught how to acquire academic credits earned from learning acquired through their life and work experiences.

The core goals of Phase I are to introduce students to the philosophy and principles of non-traditional learning; to develop students' awareness of their credit-worthy skills that they can use to realize an educational goal that has eluded them in the past; to develop a degree plan; and to establish the foundation of building a community of learners based on the cohort model.

In order to frame these goals through the lens of Covey's book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, specifically the first three habits, which are *be proactive*, *begin with the end in mind*, and *put first thing first*, we may view Phase I as a catalyst for habits of proactivity. According to Covey (1990), "the gravity pull of old habits like procrastination and selfishness can keep us from lifting off to better effectiveness" (pp.6-7). Phase I now becomes a launching pad for success. Although students will still experience a strong pull of gravity, they are now equipped with their introduction to the mental habits of self-discipline and time management, as well as with their incipient sense of being part of a supportive learning community.

It is with the underpinning of Covey's habits that adult students are coached to be proactive in their learning. The philosophy of adult education recognizes that adult students have acquired in non-traditional environments learning that is worthy of college credits. Through the process of developing a portfolio, students are able to articulate this credit-bearing learning. During this time, as students write their autobiographies, they become aware of their past dependency on people, places, and certain habits. This revelation introduces the students to the first three habits of private victory. Attaining these habits, according to Covey (1990), leads to the self-confidence which is derived from defining oneself from within, based upon one's values rather than on people's opinions or comparison to others. This discovery paves the path to unlocking the habit of being proactive. Once students recognize that some of their credit-worthy learning has taken place in non-traditional settings, they produce an essay that will allow them to petition for and gain the credits they seek. In their experiential learning essays, they are required to discuss, observe, reflect, form abstract concepts, and apply the learning in a new situation. They have now started the process of recognizing their abilities to make things happen, a recognition that means, in Covey's terms, proactivity has begun.

The foundation of the second goal, developing students' self awareness of their skills that will help them to finally attain a bachelor's degree, is built upon a retrospective educational portfolio that contains resume, autobiography, experiential learning essay, and documents of professional training and achievements. As students write about their lives, threads of dependence are identified. They define themselves by circumstances, conditions, and actions of others, which all point to reactive behavior. However, as they participate in Phase I of ADCP, students are now guided to reassess their autobiographies (and their lives). They can now be transformed from being "reactive people who are driven by their feelings, by circumstances, by conditions, by their environments" (Covey, 1990, p.71), into proactive people whose responses to the varied previously mentioned stimuli are value based. They now start to recognize "their ability to make things happen" (Covey, p.75). Students now realize that, to achieve their academic goal of obtaining a bachelor's degree, they need to "act rather than be acted upon" (Covey, p. 148). Their self-awareness of the need for proactivity leads them to read and listen to their language used in their autobiographies. Words used are indicative of students' degree of proactive habits. Words such as "I can't," "if only," "I must" are characteristic of reactive behavior, and reveal a lack of ownership of individual responsibility, while language such as "I choose," "I prefer," "I will" signal growth of proactivity, the ability to choose one's response (Covey, p.78).

Another element in enhancing proactivity is the ability to *rescript* oneself, according to Covey (1990, p.103). In writing their autobiographies, students are guided to imagine and record a future picture of where and how they see themselves. This forward-looking part of their autobiographies is an effective tool of self-empowerment. Students realize that they can change the "script" (p.103) of their lives. They can be "response-able" to use [their] imagination and creativity to write new ones that are more effective" (Covey, p.104).

For Covey (1990), people's degree of self-awareness can be measured by how much time and energy they spend on things that they have no control over, as compared to things that they can influence – things they can do something about. Proactive people, therefore, focus on what they can do and on things that they can influence. Phase I introduces ADCP students to this concept by heightening their awareness that by being proactive they have the power and influence to change some of their behaviors, such as study habits, thinking patterns, and time management.

Covey's second habit, *begin with the end in mind*, ingrains the need for the development of a personal mission statement based on correct core principles and values. In Covey's (1990) philosophy, "Whatever is at the center of our life will be the source of our security, guidance, wisdom and power" (p. 109). At the initial stage of ADCP, students are challenged to develop individual motivational phrases and sentences, which become the building blocks for their cohort's mission statement, which is solidified in semester one. This assignment also strengthens the foundation of building a community of students that evolve from being dependent to becoming independent and to ultimately transform to a level of interdependence as they move through the remainder of the program. Another important document that students develop in Phase I that reinforces this habit is an individual degree plan. This is a course-map that puts in place concrete instructions and actions that may be needed to obtain additional required credits outside of the program. This plan covers not only the fourteen months of the program's duration but remains in effect until students achieve their degree. This tangible document is the physical picture of students' imagination, their blueprint for keeping the end in mind – the completion of their degree. Once this plan is developed, students are now "response-able" to accomplish this goal. The emergence of these two documents, the mission statement and the individual degree plan, not only helps students to keep the end in mind but also to *put first things first*, Covey's third habit.

According to Covey, at the crux of being able to *put first things first* is the ability to effectively manage oneself. The development of this habit depends upon the empowerment of one's "independent will" (1990, p.147). In order to evaluate their independent will, students are challenged to examine their personal values and their ability to make and keep commitments that they have made to themselves. One of these commitments is to obtain their degree by completing the program. This commitment will require, in Covey's words, "a sense of direction and value, a burning 'yes' inside that makes it possible to say 'no' to other things " (p.149). As students seek to *put first things first*, they are introduced to life and time management. They now have to "walk [their] talk" by examining what is either important or unimportant, what is urgent or not urgent – components of Covey's time management matrix. Students are challenged to focus on things that are important but not urgent. This paves the way of effective self-management that leads to private victories and opens the path to Phase II of the program, where the quest for continued evolution from independence to interdependence takes place, thus adding value to the community of learners.

From Independence to Interdependence, Phase II

Phase II focuses on developing understanding and improved skills in Organizational Management. While this phase continues to build students' habits of independence in subject matter mastery and work ethic, Phase II of the program may be viewed through the lens of Covey's work as a journey of interdependence via habits three through six: *think win/win*; *seek first to understand, then to be understood*; *synergize*. The cohort (usually 12-18 students) meets one night per week for four hours for fifty-two consecutive weeks, with the exception of a single week break between semesters. Courses are either two or three credits. The cohort meets two sessions per credit. There are additional cohort meetings that relate to their independent research project that is based around a real-life organizational improvement problem statement, a topic that will be discussed later.

ADCP's four-hour class sessions are divided into a variety of learning segments, including lecturettes, general discussions of the subject for the evening, and reflections on specific assignments or readings. The learning highlights of each class usually come from exercises or simulations which begin with the class divided into sub-groups of four to six students, each group working on the same issue but reaching its own conclusions.

The several smaller groups then bring the presentation of their conclusions to the entire class. The discussion of the variety of approaches to resolving the issue at hand allows students to see strengths and weaknesses in their own considerations, but also to realize that there may be more than one effective resolution to the issue. Students also begin to appreciate the value of working together. They experience their own strengths and weakness as well as those of other students. They see that working in groups creates its own special stresses and frustrations. Their most consequential conclusions, however, are that those stresses and frustrations can be managed and that interdependent problem solving produces results that are far superior in quality and implementation ability to those reached in independent problem-solving.

In ADCP, the first course is Group Dynamics; however, the approaches described here for building upon community and Covey's seven habits to enhance adult learning may be adapted for and used effectively within a variety of majors and styles of program design. As a supplement to the normal group dynamics learning, and as it relates to Covey's habits, this course attempts to build on the student's independence developed in Phase I. Its primary Covey paradigm focus is on developing interdependence, especially inculcating the fourth habit, *think win/win*. There are several segments within the Group Dynamics that are especially focused on interdependence or, as we call it, developing a sense of cohort community.

In a segment of the first Group Dynamics class, students begin to build a foundation for community as they consider what is required to develop an effective group. The session concludes with a 30-minute tape synopsis and discussion of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. There are also segments that place students in life-threatening group simulations that require a consensus solution. The most memorable of these experiences for most students is a simulation where their goal is to survive being stranded in a desert. Unfortunately, most of them reach a conclusion that keeps them from surviving. However, even their mistakes in group processing seem to add consequentially to their understanding of the value of interdependence. In particular, the follow-up analysis and discussion of what worked and what did not work highlights the crucial role, in obtaining win/win solutions, of Covey's fifth habit: *seek first to understand, then to be understood*. One of the clearly counterproductive behaviors that is often played out in the students' decision-making during the simulation is the tendency to seek to be understood by others before we seek to understand them. The *Stranded in the Desert* simulation characteristically has a lasting impact on students, perhaps because we often learn more from our failures than from our successes.

During the fourth session of Group Dynamics, students are given time to develop some formal support for developing a sense of community, through election of class leaders with specific individual responsibilities. The leaders are encouraged to work as a team in developing community within the cohort. One of the elected leaders is called "cohort community champion," and is specifically responsible for the following three roles: *encouraging development of cohort community* - via support sessions, pre-class meetings, class networks, meals, and birthday or holiday celebrations; *arranging for the cohort celebration at the conclusion of the program*; and *encouraging and coordinating other activities and get- togethers* to assist in developing a sense of community, support, and spirit within the cohort. However, not just the community champion but the leadership team as a whole is encouraged to develop support chains and cohesiveness among students.

Cohorts benefit from a variety of student-generated social gatherings. For example, since students, in the main, are coming directly to class from work, they often share meals before class, bring class treats to share at their mid-class break, and/or celebrate holidays or birthdays at class break. It is not unusual for cohorts to have get-togethers at someone's home, usually to include other family members. Pool parties or picnics are often an opportunity to get together. The community highlight of the year is usually a carefully planned graduation dinner. These graduation dinners are most often held at an upscale close-by restaurant. However, cohorts have gone on dinner cruises or planned an evening that includes dinner and a Broadway show. The financial impact of these outings is minimized because the treasurer usually collects a dollar or two per week, which provides a reasonable budget for a year-end celebration.

In their final evaluations of the entire program, students often refer to the special value that the sense of community developed in the cohort has had on their educational experience. ADCP graduates that pursue a master's degree usually seek a school that offers a cohort learning structure. Students from cohorts that, early on, have developed a sense of community usually have a more positive learning experience and are more inclined to continue their education.

Another activity that occurs in Group Dynamics and is focused specifically on interdependence is the development of a mission statement, or a statement of commitment. Students begin this statement of commitment through a structured brainstorming session. Each student, in turn, is given the opportunity to offer a concept or phrase that should be included in the statement of commitment. This activity continues until no class member has any additional suggestions. At conclusion of this activity, the cohort has created a list of about 40 phrases that describe the concepts that the students believe a statement of commitment should contain. This list is then reduced to about a dozen concepts for which there is consensus about inclusion in the statement. Two or three students are then assigned on a volunteer basis to develop the list into a cogent statement for all students to sign. The statements developed by individual cohorts vary in length and organization, but contain common thoughts. Following is a representative statement of commitment:

Pledge

> *As interdependent members of Cohort 140, we commit to creating an atmosphere of excellence. We will strive for a more cohesive, mutually supportive, and trusting group that has high expectations for task accomplishment. We will endeavor to be conscious of our individual responsibilities to the success of the cohort.*
>
> *We vow to respect individual differences and values, personalities, skills, and the idiosyncratic behavior of all members.*

We welcome conflict and pledge to use it in a positive way. We will provide for the advancement of academic achievement and encourage the growth and support of other cohort members.

We embrace the values of integrity, fairness, respect, and open communication. We recognize individual worth and will build relationships on trust and understanding.

We believe in Cohort 140 achieving its goals. We realize failure to comply with the aforementioned will hurt the cohort and our chances of succeeding in this program.

(signatures follow)

The development of such statements of commitment, including the formalization of the commitment by signing the document, seems to have a positive influence on students and their learning process. Signing the document adds depth to the students' commitment and to their belief that they can rely on each other.

By the completion of Group Dynamics, students have developed a strong foundation for building their interdependence. The soundness of the structure varies from cohort to cohort and among individual students, but the strong sense of cohort community seems to have positively impacted the educational process for nearly every student. Not only in Group Dynamics, but throughout the program, the curriculum relies heavily on exercises, business cases, and simulations that are designed to encourage divergent views on the appropriate solution, but require a consensus resolution. In some instances, students believe strongly enough that theirs is the only appropriate solution that they may violate some of the elements in their statement of commitment. When a violation occurs, it is not unusual for a student to dig through his or her materials, find, and read the portion of the commitment that has been violated. Such situations both encourage full participation and keep in students' minds their obligation one to another.

In order to give a broader idea of how a variety of courses can incorporate some segments that build community by developing interdependence, here are some examples of individual segments of other courses that are not specifically focused on group dynamics but have individual learning segments that build interdependence.

In the concluding simulation of their Organizational Analysis course, students are placed in small work groups, in order to build paper towers. They are told that only the best tower will be accepted. There are a number of impediments to success built into the exercise. These contrived impediments and the competitive emphasis create significant stress within the work groups. Through the exercise and the subsequent de-briefing, students experience that strong interdependence within the work group can overcome difficult circumstances, and Covey's sixth habit, *synergize*, comes to life.

By the time they reach Managerial Communications, the fifth course in the program, students have begun to develop their own vision of what is required to be successful. An exercise in Managerial Communications gives them an opportunity to work in small groups to develop presentations that they would make to new students to help them be successful. Sharing their individual views and coming to a consensus as to what should be communicated about achieving success adds to the students' own understanding of interdependence. During this exercise, students share their views and listen to group members' views on how to successfully complete the program. Through this sharing and development of a consensus for their group presentation's content and style, they hear valuable input from other participants and make some accommodation in their views in order to reach a consensus.

During a Faith and World Views course, students are required to explain their worldview to the rest of the cohort. The diversity of worldviews among students raises a good number of bristles early on. By the conclusion of the course, students better understand and are more accepting of various worldviews. Of greater significance is an improved ability to avoid allowing a difference in worldview to have a negative impact on their ability to work together.

The final course in the program is Values and Ethics. This is a course that is currently of special interest because of the corporate ethical issues that are in the news almost every day. The course includes several segments in which students, working in groups, have to find a consensus resolution to a difficult ethical or value system case. Since these cases do not have clear, bright, easy resolutions, students recognize the value of interdependent solutions. At the conclusion of the Values and Ethics course, students are required to reflect on how their value systems have changed during their yearlong experience in the program. Students almost universally comment that their ability to work together has improved over the year. They also usually reflect that they now place a far higher value on interdependent approaches to solving difficult life problems.

Woven through semesters one and two is cohort members' organizationally-linked Applied Research Project. This research project will be discussed now primarily through the lens of the seventh habit of renewal, or *sharpen the saw*.

Habit of Renewal, Applied Research Project

Apropos the theme of developing habits of highly effective people and the value added to the students' lives through their education, in the area of research, which is a common component across the curriculum, the habit of renewal, or *sharpen the saw*, can be emphasized as an important byproduct. In Covey's words, "Renewal is the principle – and the process – that empowers us to move on an upward spiral of growth and change, of continuous improvement. . . . Moving along the upward spiral requires us to *learn*, *commit*, and *do* on increasingly higher planes. . . . To keep progressing, we must learn, commit, and do – learn, commit, and do – and learn, commit, and do again" (1990, pp. 304, 306). Nyack's degree completion work emphasizes the experiential link of research work by including an independent applied research project, one focused on a real-life, organizationally-linked problem that is susceptible to change. The Applied Research Project involves two principal components: a literature review (first semester) and live data collection and compilation of the report (second semester). ADCP's Applied Research Project builds independent skills, but supports those skills through a communal context.

In both components of ADCP's Applied Research Project, during semesters one and two, students develop skills of independence needed for professional and academic advancement, that is, for succeeding in higher management positions and graduate level work. Students get to use academic skills to analyze a problem and form recommendations and interpersonal skills to present their findings. They learn in their individual research how their organization can be influenced through well-informed management, good organizational structure, and effective communication of ideas; and they get to share their ideas in a public forum.

One helpful change we have implemented in ADCP's Applied Research Project has reinforced the experiential link between academic habits of independence and workplace managerial habits of interdependence. We have created a work-oriented format for the final document that is submitted. Previously, the project was presented in the academic format of a chapter-by-chapter style, beginning with an abstract and then building slowly from the organizational background of chapter one to the recommendations and conclusions of chapter five. To make the purpose and methodology more comprehensible and useful to adult students, the Applied Research Project is now structured more like a business report: with the executive summary first, containing the most important findings and recommendations; then a full report on the data collected in investigation of the problem; and then the literature review.

In keeping with Covey's second habit of *begin with the end in mind*, the student handbook for the Applied Research Project now includes a former student's reflections on the value of the Applied Research Project. The student-writer presents the relevance of the various academic steps to personal and professional life. She mentions that she used the process subsequently in another work project and comments that the skills she has gained will be useful in her upcoming career-shift from radiology to law. She points out the parallel between building an effective applied research project recommendation and an effective law case.

In making a bridge between school and work, this research project helps reverse a tendency toward mental laxity that can be observed in too many of our adult students. For, as Covey asserts, ". . .as soon as we leave the external discipline of school, many of us let our minds atrophy" (1990, p. 294). Unlike the atrophying adults Covey speaks of, i.e., people whose only in-depth reading is job-related, many of our adult students scarcely even read within their fields. The Applied Research Project helps instill a habit of ongoing mental development and study discipline for renewal at least within the organizational context of the workplace. Perhaps this habit of professional renewal will then inspire habits of personal renewal.

The intentional coordination of the independent Applied Research Project to a community support system reinforces the link between private and public victories. In the first semester, students use some of the sources they have found on their topic as the basis of an oral presentation they give as part of their Managerial Communications course. Thus, they have the opportunity to see their independently accomplished literature review work validated in an interdependent context. In the second semester, students apply their academic coursework to a real-life situation, using concepts they've learned in Research Methods and Statistics to design, implement, and interpret their data collection and to present their findings and recommendations. Here, too, in connection with their primary research via live data collection, the private work students have produced is celebrated publicly, in the cohort environment. As the final aspect of program closure, each student gives an oral report to the cohort on the findings and recommendations of his or her Applied Research Project. In this way, students receive respectful professional attention from their peers in an academic forum, and private victory is transmuted into public victory. Students applaud and commend one another's efforts with sincerity, for, through their strong community, they have been part of one another's success.

In particular, a strong community of learners can help resolve this significant and underlying dilemma in adult education: that while education is itself a form of renewal for adult students, i.e., a means to propel, energize, and restore them toward and through growth, it also is the source of ongoing stress that may drain and propel them into crisis mode. The community helps get the students through the fatigue and weariness of the extra work pressure, and the successful completion of the work then allows students to gain perspective on the renewal that has occurred in their lives, due in part to the very reading and writing that they learned to make space for in their lives.

Conclusion

Through attending to the important link between habits of independence, interdependence, and renewal and to the power of a peer community to support and challenge adult students, we educators may well want to be more proactive in designing programs and courses that both build and draw upon student community and provide experientially-linked contexts. Assignments for research papers would seem to lend themselves especially well to such efforts. Professional contexts for research assignments in a broad variety of academic subject areas can be imagined. Brief oral reports on research findings can be included in course design. Perhaps teams of student-researchers can be created for combined written and/or oral presentations on a topic, similar to how business teams prepare collaborative reports or academic colleagues combine their research for journal articles, books, or conference presentations.

Finding creative ways to help students see the practical benefits of their education is facilitated by observing the link between the content and methodology of our various curricula and Covey's seven habits. As Peter Senge (1990) emphasizes in his systems approach to learning organizations, *The Fifth Discipline*, innovative organizations "discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at all levels in an organization" (p.4). In their work on healing connections, Jean Baker Miller and Irene Pierce Stiver assert, "What matters in people's lives is whether they can feel that they are moving, that they can make something happen" (1997, p. 53). Miller and Stiver's "making things happen" through mutual influence and not a power-over mode is in keeping with the higher emphasis Stephen Covey places on interpersonal contributions. As we move from what Knowles (1972) has called a "static" orientation to an "innovative" orientation, we move into what he identifies as a "multidirectional" exchange of information and a "people-centered, caring" environment. In Knowles's terms, we are willing to define roles "broadly," use our power "supportively," and design our endeavors for the "releasing [of students'] energy" (p. 62).

Donald Schon (1983) defines a "reflective practitioner" as a professional who "does not separate thinking from doing" (p.68). For many years, college instructors were viewed as "experts" and "authorities" in their subjects. The world of expanding and/or changing technology, information, and competencies facilitates our shift from an attitude of expert to one of "reflective practitioner." The expert would say, as Shon puts it, "I am presumed to know, and must claim to do so, regardless of my own uncertainty" whereas the reflective practitioner would say, again in Shon's words, "I am presumed to know, but I am not the only one in the situation to have relevant and important knowledge. My uncertainties may be a source of learning for me and for them" (p. 300).

When we shift our paradigm, according to Stephen Covey, we can bring our mental models into greater agreement with the realities of our current educational setting. Seeing our educational activities through the lens of the seven habits can help us to structure our courses with rigor and flexibility, recognizing the value of hard work and academic standards but also fulfilling the adult students' need to be shown the relevance of their effort. In Covey's words, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* is an "'inside-out' approach to personal and interpersonal effectiveness. . The inside-out approach says that private victories precede public victories. . . . [It is] a continuing process of renewal based on the natural laws that govern human growth and progress" (1990, pp.42-43). Our conscious identification of how our courses relate to the habits of private victory, public victory, and renewal across and within the curriculum can help us to be more highly effective educators—in that our students will become highly effective not only as students but as people.

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'Will you be my critical friend? Establishing a Safe Space for Reflection Within a Classroom Community'

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Due to demographic, cultural and economic factors third level institutions in Ireland are only beginning to acknowledge the demand for higher education from mature students. A recent Government Report suggest that there is a marked lack of the support structures which adults, (and particularly adults who have experienced educational disadvantage) require in order to maximise opportunities to succeed within a formal learning environment.

This paper discusses a pedagogical model, which was piloted within the delivery of the third year Social Care BA degree programme in Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland. This degree programme combines periods of work experience in Social Care settings with periods of college-based learning in its four-year programme.

Both mature and traditional students attend as part of the same student group, (mature learners being in the minority).

The model encourages the development of a classroom community, which facilitates students to integrate learning from events experienced during their practical work experience with learning they achieve within the college setting.

Through the use of group work and students working in peer-pairs with a 'critical friend,' reflection is promoted through dialogue and focused conversations. Within the 'safe-space' which is established within the classroom, students reveal and compare their developing strengths and weaknesses as emerging Social Care practitioners; and discuss areas of learning and their own Care work philosophies.

As part of the model, students are required to transcribe these spoken narratives into written reflective accounts in order to illustrate their own stories of learning, meaning-making and professional development. These are included as part of a 'Care work Portfolio' submitted at the end of the academic year for assessment.

This paper discusses the centrality of the classroom community to the Care work Portfolio process.

Dublin Institute of Technology and the Dept of Social Studies

Dublin Institute of Technology provides third level education to over 22,000 students from different sites around the city of Dublin, making it the largest third level Institution in the State.

Moves are underway to house the entire Institute on one site, north of the city. It is anticipated that this will happen within the next few years.

The Dept of Social Sciences is part of the faculty of Fine Arts and is currently situated in the Rathmines area of Dublin.

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The Social Care Degree Programme

The profession of 'Social Care' is relatively new in the Republic of Ireland although well established in mainland Europe. Care work for children and clients living in residential settings and attending specialist day care centres, have traditionally been undertaken by untrained people from religious organisations and volunteers.

The work is frequently challenging and difficult, demanding high levels of self-knowledge and professional skill from the Social Care worker. As a result, the necessity for training has gradually become evident. In response to the Kennedy Report (1969), and the Task Force report (1980) Dublin Institute of Technology offered a Diploma in Social Care course to school leavers in 1981. In 1997 a four year B.A.(Hons.) Degree programme was devised and offered to both school leavers and Diploma level practitioners. The curriculum is designed to facilitate the integration of student learning acquired in the College classroom and from work experience placements. The nature of the learning encountered frequently challenges students' sense of self and stimulates the need for both personal and professional change.

Work Experience Placements

> In the third year of the Social Care Degree programme, students attend a twelve-week work experience placement. The purpose of work experience placements within the Degree programme is to allow students the opportunities to experience different work environments. In these they have opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and their own professional identities. Work placements facilitate College tutors to assess students' performance and potential in Social Care.
>
> Placements are carefully selected by tutors from organisations offering Social Care; one of the major criteria being that students must be supervised by an experienced Care worker who will undertake to act as a mentor to students in the workplace and liase closely with the students College tutor. Last years placements included children's residential homes, a drug treatment centre, a centre offering education for young school leavers, a high security unit for young offenders and a care centre for adults with special needs. As this is their third and final placement consideration is given to students preferences as to where they will attend.

The Social Care Portfolio

In 2000 it was decided to introduce a Portfolio as a methodology to enable students to record and integrate their College learning with work experience learning and document this for assessment. A model was developed that aims to facilitate the development of self monitoring, skill development and self assessment in Students attending third year work experience placements.

Lee Schulman's description of a portfolio served as inspiration. 'A portfolio is the structured documentary history of a (carefully selected) set of coached or mentored accomplishments substantiated by samples of student work and fully realised only through reflective writing, deliberation and serious conversation.' (1994: 4-14)

The model was piloted and evaluated in the academic year 2000/2001 and integrated into the third year of the Social Care Degree programme in 2001/2002. In addition to the content and assessment design, a pedagogical framework was developed to support the Portfolio process.

The classroom design as a 'safe space' is central to the framework.

Within this 'safe space' students are encouraged to:

- Agree an understanding of the concept of reflection and its use in the learning process
- Use a given model to scaffold their reflective processes
- Examine the roles of the Social Care worker
- Acknowledge their own areas of strengths and weaknesses in relation to these roles
- Identify a peer with whom to establish a 'critical friend' relationship
- Re visit significant learning events from their work experience and discuss these with their 'critical friend.'
- Transcribe their spoken narratives into written reflective accounts in order to illustrate their own stories of learning and their developing Care work philosophies
- Attend a two-day de-briefing session at the end of the placement period and give a brief presentation on their work placement experience to the rest of the group.

Students are allocated a day free from work placement commitments to attended College at approximately two/three week intervals in order to attend the Classroom sessions.

Reflection and the use of narrative

Reflection as a learning tool is the central learning vehicle of the Portfolio process. The content requirements of the Portfolio demands that in addition to preparing three specific assignment areas, students are requested to submit four reflective accounts. In these, they are asked to narrate their professional growth and development in relation to their developing identities as Care workers.

Anecdotal evidence from teaching staff within the Dept of Social Sciences, suggested that previous experiences of asking students to reflect had not always been successful. Students tended to compile descriptive rather than reflective accounts often with very little critical analysis of personal learning.

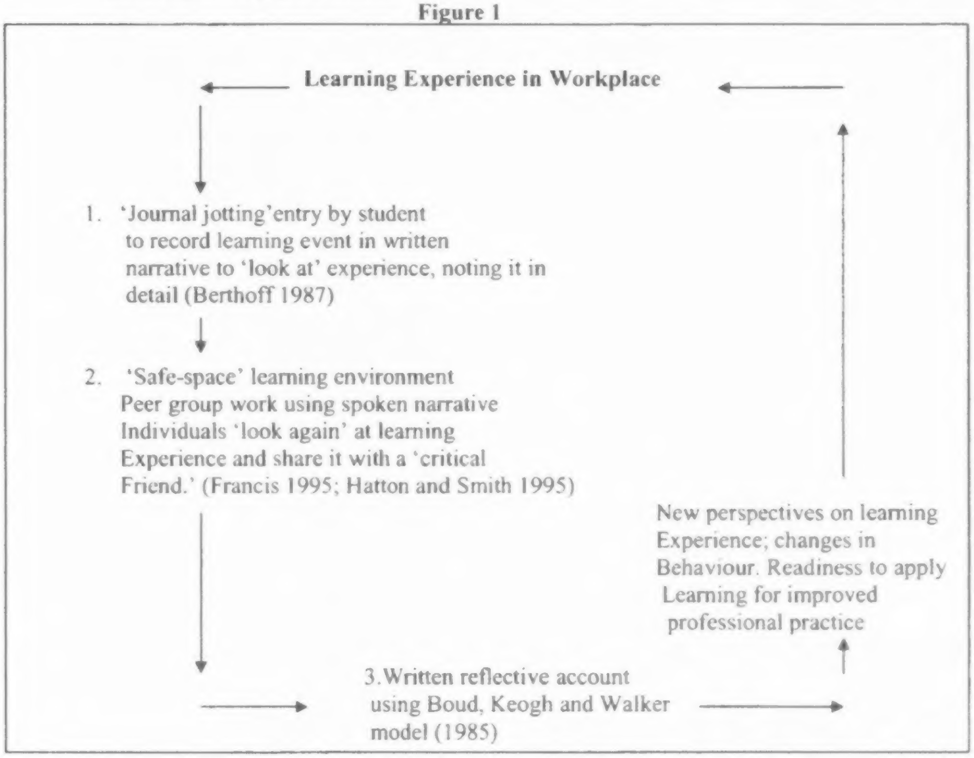
Shulman (1996) advises that a growing body of literature suggests that 'the business of going meta explicitly, consciously and directly may be the key to the elusive transfer of training that we've been wrestling with for over a century.'

The concept of meta-cognition as an actual area of knowledge and as something that can be taught is advocated by Bruner (1998) but, up until that point in time, had not been included as a component of the Social Care Degree curriculum.

As part of the Portfolio model, students discuss and agree a common definition of reflection as a tool to integrate and link learning. The model designed by Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) is used as a scaffold on which they structure their reflective accounts. Students are encouraged to consider narrative as significant to the process of reflection; as a mode of thought, a vehicle of meaning making and the means by which they tell their own individual stories of experience and learning (Bruner, 1996).

Students in the construction of their Portfolios use three different types of narrative. See **Figure 1** below.

Figure 1


Learning Experience in Workplace
1. 'Journal jotting'entry by student to record learning event in written narrative to 'look at' experience, noting it in detail (Berthoff 1987)
2. 'Safe-space' learning environment Peer group work using spoken narrative Individuals 'look again' at learning Experience and share it with a 'critical Friend.' (Francis 1995; Hatton and Smith 1995)
3. Written reflective account using Boud, Keogh and Walker model (1985)
New perspectives on learning Experience; changes in Behaviour. Readiness to apply Learning for improved professional practice

Work experience placements are busy places where the professional and personal dilemmas that students encounter can get lost and loose their significance for learning and development. 'It takes clear space, contemplative time and good conversation to engage and understand complex problems' (Daloz *et al.* 1996). By recording significant learning events as journal jottings, these can then be revisited and reflected upon with a peer (or peers) in the safe space of the classroom environment.

The recording of these as reflective accounts result in new perspectives on the learning experience and changes in behaviour and attitudes which can then be applied in the workplace for improved professional practice.

The classroom as a 'Safe Space' for learning

> Definitions of pedagogy whereby 'the joint construction of knowledge and the process of dialogue are central' to the process of teaching and learning, are fundamental to situated learning theories (Mercer 1995:72). Bruner (1986) emphasises the importance of narrative, discourse and the centrality of language to inter-subjectivity and learning in his 'pedagogy of mutuality.' Cobbs' (1994) portrayal of constructivist theories suggest that interaction between learners are significant in that they acts as both a source of perturbations and an opportunity to problem solve within the students own 'self-organized' learning. Rogoff (1990) also stresses the centrality of communication and co-ordination in the collaborative management of learning, between learners and their social partners.

The potential of groups to provide a safe space or 'cultural island' for their members has long been utilized in guidance and counselling practice. In these contexts the group is valued,' not just for the possibilities of peer support that it provides but also for the opportunity to reclaim and reinterpret the lived experience of group members as they struggle to cope with new circumstances or explore new opportunities.' (Brown, Crawford, Edwards *et al.* 2000:52).

Bruner's (1996) preconditions for a setting where authentic and enduring learning can happen, (activity, reflection and collaboration) support the need for the creation of a community where these can take place.

The significance of creating 'safe' environments where peer-learning is facilitated and formalised within teaching and learning programmes is slowly gaining recognition in educational settings. However, as Boud suggests these practices are often introduced into existing courses in an *ad hoc* way, without considerations of their implications' (2001:3).

Providing a structure within which these interactions can occur can be a challenge for teachers and course designers. The need to facilitate the development of a classroom community where the emphasis is on students learning from each other, challenges more traditional didactic approaches to teaching and teacher roles.

'Students are often better able to reflect on and explore ideas when the presence and authority of a staff member (Boud and Walker, 1998) do not influence them' (Boud, 2001:8)

In creating a 'safe space' for learning, the teacher therefore needs to recognise his/her role as being:

- Responsible for facilitating students to construct a mutually supportive environment in which they feel free to express opinions, test ideas and ask for, or offer help when it is needed.'(Boud (2001:12) and Smith, 1983).
- Part of the learning group but also as that of an expert, ready to guide participation (Rogoff 1990) when required.
- A discourse guide (Mercer 1995)

- A facilitator of learning, still able to teach and have certain control over the curriculum without dominating the group (Friere and Macedo 1999).

The value of 'safe space' for reflective thinking

In the context of the College classroom sessions of the Portfolio process, students are introduced to the need to create and establish an emotionally supportive environment in which they feel 'safe' and have the confidence to reveal how they think. The expression of personal material in reflection can be threatening. What might seem threatening to one person might seem fine to another. There is a need to recognise and respect each other's differences, bearing in mind that the purpose in being reflective in this environment is for students to evaluate their own professional development and practice as Social Care workers. Students are encourage to contribute to these sessions by recognising that the environment needs to be:

- A relaxed, informal learning environment
- An environment in which learners feel safe to take risks in their cognitive explorations
- An environment in which there is understanding of the emotional elements in refection and one in which these can be supported
- An environment that will support and help those who have difficulties with reflection as a learning process
- An environment in which confidentiality is respected

Supporting Activities

1. **The physical environment**

   Aim: To change the physical classroom environment and jointly create informal conditions for the establishment of a safe space for interactive learning.

   Activity: Students usually enter classrooms that have been pre-arranged in traditional classroom style with the teacher's desk at the front of the room and chairs and tables positioned in rows behind.

   In order to create a relaxed informal environment both teacher and students work together to physically re-arrange the tables and chairs into informal arrangements to facilitate students to work in groups. The teacher's desk is put to one side. This involves collaboration and action! By working together with the students the joint process illustrates the shift in emphasis by the teacher from being in authority to being part of the joint classroom community.

2. **The establishment of a mutually agreed understanding of what is meant by a 'safe space' in this context.**

   Aim: to encourage students to see that in addition to the physical boundaries of the classroom, other conditions need to be reviewed and agreed to create an effective learning community where shared reflection can take place.

Activity: Introduction by teacher to the background and relevance of creating a 'safe space' for peer-learning and reflection. Small group work followed by class discussion and general feedback. Agreement is reached as to the terms and conditions that students recognise as being central to the establishment and maintenance of their classroom 'safe space'.

3. **Drawing on experiences – 'where I come from, what I bring':**

Aim: to facilitate students to think about past experiences in life that have been significant in shaping who they are now and how these have influenced their development as a Social Care worker.

Activity 1: Students draw their lifeline, marking in significant turning points and learning events, which influenced them in their choice of profession. These are discussed within their groups.

Activity 2: Introduction and brief class discussion of the key residential Careworker roles (Graham, G. 1995): Organizer, Team member, Attachment builder, Liaison person/programmer, counsellor/therapeutic teacher, Leader. Students identify in which roles they feel most able and looking at their lifelines, discuss and establish where and why they feel these are so. E.G. Where can they see their skills as an organizer began to be apparent? A school prefect, perhaps?

4. **Reflection as a learning tool**

Aim: To revisit the experiences of the preceding activity to encourage understanding of the relevance of the reflection process as a learning tool.

Activity: Working in small groups, students analyse their thinking processes behind the previous activity - how they needed to look back over what they had done, analyse events, be self-critical, note own progression in learning and behaviour and subsequent changes in themselves. Significant learning from the College environment is also considered. Each group come up with a definition of reflection and how it helped them to learn. Entire class then work together to come up with a definition of reflection and what it means to be a reflective practitioner.

Teacher outlines the significance of the reflection process for the integration of learning from the workplace and classroom and the Portfolio process. Introduction of the scaffold for structured reflections.

5. **Choosing a 'critical friend'**

Aim: To choose a peer partner with whom to reflect, feed back and learn from and with in the following sessions.

Activity: Working in small groups, students identify the elements of skills and knowledge which they feel are required for each of the key Careworker roles. E.G. An effective organizer must be able to…..forward plan, time-keep, be neat and tidy, be self-disciplined and focused etc.

These are then fed back to the rest of the Class and recorded on a flip chart.

An area of the room is chosen to represent each Care work role. Students choose the role in which they feel most comfortable and go and stand in their appropriate role area. Standing in their strength area, they then identify a peer in one of the role areas where they feel they are least able and ask them to be their 'critical friend'!

6. The 'critical friend' relationship

Aim: to understand and implement peer partnering and learning from sharing reflections and working with each other.

Activity: Teacher outlines the role as Hatton and Smith (1995) describe it as 'a technique' which creates an opportunity for giving voice to ones own thinking while at the same time being heard in a sympathetic, but constructively critical way. Students discuss learning events and dilemmas from their work placements, using their journal jottings as prompts. The scaffold acts as a framework for their reflective processes. Resolution and learning are constructed within the peer relationship as academic knowledge is fused with life experience, growing awareness of professional growth and identities and the students own personal strengths and weaknesses.

These spoken narratives are then recorded as written, again using the framework as a scaffold. They act as a source of reference for the final four reflective accounts, which are submitted as part of the Social Care Portfolio for assessment.

7. De-briefing session

Aim : To facilitate students to learn about each others Social Care Placements and in so doing widen their perspectives and knowledge of practice. By listening to others and class discussion it is hoped that a collective discourse will emerge, increasing the sense of corporate professional identity.

Activity: Large circle arrangement of chairs. Informal atmoshere. Students presenting in groups of three, according to their types of placement; for example, students who had worked in residential care presented one after another.

Evaluation

The Portfolio model was originally evaluated as a whole at the end of the pilot phase, with particular emphasis on the significance of the reflective element to the learning process.

At the end of this academic year, more focused research was planned to record the views of the student group as to the validity of the classroom sessions as communities for learning. It was hoped that the findings would corroborate with previous findings but also illuminate the significance of the 'safe space' environment from the discourse of users.

The use of a focus group was chosen as a qualitative methodology that would operate well as a 'stand alone' means for data collection.

The following comments taken from the transcription of the tape of the session indicate areas which students felt went well and areas where improvements could be made:

> *Moving the tables and chairs around so that we could sit in small groups for discussions was a great idea, but it might have been better not to have had tables at all, just chairs…….*
>
> *We were more aware of the lecturer being part of the learning group when we were sitting in a circle*
>
> *The Class group was too big. It was hard to feel safe with such a big group…*
>
> *We need more classroom sessions through placement so there's more continuity…..*
>
> *I think the idea of 'safe space' is a brilliant idea! It's just that we are so used to being told what to do, we weren't sure how to do it. Having it explained, helped.*
>
> *The last two days were really interesting. I learnt a lot about different Care Work models and types of provision.*
>
> *Critical friends idea should have been introduced long before placements began. I found the relationship really useful and could have done with the support during the first two weeks of my placement which I found really hard…*
>
> *Much easier to choose a friend friend to be your critical friend, than someone you don't know very well*
>
> *I think its important that its someone you don't know very well so that it models the sort of professional relationship that you are going to have to develop with colleagues…..*
>
> *My critical friend pointed out to me things I wouldn't really see; different ways of going about things…*

> *The whole process helps you to see the bigger picture. Without reflection work as a Care Worker is merely a series of events. With reflection, all these events can be turned into learning opportunities. These simple events can be turned into a series of interlocking clues to discover who you are as a Care Worker. Reflection helped me to join these together to form something of a learning curve for me.....*
>
> *Overall I feel that the reflection process has helped me gain a greater self-knowledge and critical awareness of myself and of my practice, and I hope it has enabled me to become a more effective Care Worker.*

What next?

The Teaching and Learning Centre of the Dublin Institute of Technology has recently allocated funding for the Social Care Portfolio model to be documented into a handbook for publication. It is intended for use by both teachers and students. The intention is that it should both inform the Portfolio process and explain the significance of 'safe space' within the Classroom sessions to facilitate reflection.

Although there are a number of refinements and improvements to be made to the model; the evaluation procedures suggest that it is proving an effective process in facilitating and stimulating students to integrate learning within the Social Care Degree curriculum.

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What Makes a Cohort a Learning Community? Reflections and Realizations

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The purpose of this paper is to provide a starting place for an ALLIANCE Conference discussion of student cohorts as learning communities. As a discussion prompt, the writer has identified several qualities that she believes are fundamental for creating learning communities. During the conference discussion, the list of qualities will be expanded and elaborated upon. This discussion prompt is anchored in scholarly literature about learning and human relationships, in the writer's interest in transformative learning, and in her work with cohorts of adult students in an accelerated degree-completion program at the University of New England.

Working Definitions

In at least one dictionary, the first two definitions of the term *cohort* are the following: "one of the 10 divisions of a Roman legion, consisting of 300 to 600 men" and "a group or band united in some struggle." Both descriptions imply strength and a challenging purpose. The term *community* is defined as "a social group or class having common interests," and also as "common possession or participation." (American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language).

When a cohort becomes a learning community, it is a group united in the struggle of learning, with *struggle* meaning "to be strenuously engaged with a problem, task, undertaking, or the like" (American Heritage Dictionary). The *struggle of learning* is the cohort's common interest, its *common possession and participation*. The cohort united as a learning community is "strenuously engaged" in learning tasks, fully absorbed in working through challenging problems. Given the pivotal importance of worthwhile problems as a catalyst for learning, it makes sense that a definition of *cohort as learning community* calls for strenuous engagement in challenging tasks.

Learning as a common possession. In offering the metaphor of the learning struggle as a common *possession*, we are led to imagine how a cohort of students might experience learning together if they were to regard the struggle of the learning process as their *common possession*. For example, what would happen in a cohort if the learning struggle were approached with the passion and care spent on one's most valuable possession (tangible or not)? How would a cohort protect its learning struggle? Share its learning struggle and with whom? If the cohort as learning community were to regard learning as its common possession, which particular qualities or elements would strengthen learners' "strenuous engagement"?

Learning as common participation. If learning were the cohort's common participation, how would the cohort be engaged and with whom? What would learners be thinking, saying and doing? How would learners be acting and acting out? A view of learning as *common participation* directs attention to strengthening the *whole* cohort's engagement in it.

Strengthening Engagement in Learning

Using characteristics of effective learning. In identifying particular ways to strengthen cohorts as learning communities, the characteristics of what is widely known as *meaningful learning* quickly surface as community-building elements. For example, much has been written about the significance of (1) providing worthwhile problems relevant to learners, (2) the use of student metaphors and themes, and (3) active processing of experience, including reflection, to help learners internalize information in personally meaningful ways (Caine and Caine, pp. 156-167). Such effective learning approaches are important in building community both because (1) they work to entice learners into the learning process and (2) deepen their engagement in it. Through their active processing of experience, students discover what they have in common and what distinguishes each from one another. Commonalities and differences *together* are held in common as resources for use in the work of the community.

Trust as fundamental for community. A cohort cannot become a learning community unless its members possess fundamental trust in each other. Otherwise, how can learners feel free to participate in sharing and exploring experiences and in taking stock of their learning, all of which are essential to building a learning community?

In creating a learning community, learners must develop trust in each other. At the same time, learners are to be trusted. In his classic work Freedom to Learn, Carl Rogers (1979) describes the trust that characterizes learning communities as follows:

> When a facilitator creates, even to a modest degree, a classroom climate characterized by all that he can achieve of *realness, prizing, and empathy*, when he trusts the *constructive tendency* of the individual and the group; then he discovers that he has inaugurated an educational revolution. Learning of a different quality, proceeding at a different pace, *with a greater degree of pervasiveness,* occurs. Feelings—*positive, negative, confused*---become part of the classroom experience. *Learning becomes life, and a very vital life* at that. The student is on his way, sometimes excitedly, sometimes reluctantly, to becoming a learning, changing, being. [all italics added] (p. 115)

Trust is also essential if learners and facilitators of learning are to be open to alternative perspectives of the world. To illustrate the quality of trust that learners need, Langer (1997) offers the following from Japanese philosopher Kakuzo Okakura:

> One day Soshi was walking on the bank of a river with a friend. "How delightfully the fishes are enjoying themselves in the water," exclaimed Soshi. His friend spoke to him thus, "You are not a fish, how do you know that the fishes are enjoying themselves?" "'You are not myself," returned Soshi, "how do you know that I do not know that the fishes are enjoying themselves?" (p. 139)

Empathic understanding. Cohorts as learning communities are characterized by their engagement in relevant work, learners' sharing and re-interpretation of experience, and trust in each other and the process. *Empathic understanding* is another important piece in building community. According to Rogers, empathic understanding means "understanding from the learner's inside." Especially, Rogers notes, "this kind of understanding is sharply different from the usually evaluative understanding which follows the pattern of "I understand what is wrong with you . . . this attitude of standing in the other's shoes, of viewing the world through the student's eyes, is almost unheard of in the classroom . . . But it has a tremendously releasing effect when it occurs." (p. 112)

In describing the power of empathic understanding for creating community, the authors of *Common Fire* refer to the value of such an understanding for challenging people's sense of "tribalism" and thus making it possible for individuals to "recompose their prior sense of 'we' and 'they,' making possible "a commitment to the *common* good, rather than simply to me and mine." (Daloz, Keen, Keen & Parks, p. 68)

Finally, so that the discussion may begin, here are some words written by Mary Catherine Bateson which succinctly capture the spirit of *learning community* as it has been envisioned thus far: "I am not what I know but what I am willing to learn . . . Growing, we move through worlds of difference, the cycles and circles of a life, fulfilled by overlapping with the lives of others." (p. 18)

Internship Partnerships For Enrichment

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Edward Gordon writes in *Skill Wars* (2000) that future meaningful internships will include joint collaboration with local unions and businesses. Kansas is fortunate to already have exemplary joint collaborations with businesses that are providing enriched internship opportunities. This AHEA presentation will focus on three particular internship enrichment opportunities we believe provide a foundation for future internship models. The three internships involve postsecondary institutions in Kansas: one four-year public university, one community college, and one technical college.

Judy and D'Amico (1999) in *Workforce 2020* encourage employers to be creative in recruiting and retaining workers. These postsecondary institutions, in collaboration with industry, have provided creative internship opportunities designed to recruit and retain workers. Emporia State University combines practical work experience with formal schooling in a five-year program of alternating semesters of study and work with a cooperating employer. Employers include the Central Intelligence Agency, Disney, Enterprise Rent A Car, General Services Administration, Internal Revenue Service, Johnson County Kansas Government, City of Topeka Zoo, Toys "R" Us, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and U.S. Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Garden City Community College established a successful internship program with Iowa Beef Processing Company in Garden City, recruiting high-school juniors and seniors into a 2+1+2 program: Two years of concurrent internship in high school, one year of paid general education courses at Garden City Community College, and two years of employment. Students attending Wichita Area Technical School collaborate with The Boeing Company located in Wichita, Kansas, offering internships for high-school students starting their junior year in high school, working for two summers as trainees. Students work concurrently with Wichita Area Technical School for training and education.

Another component of this presentation on enhancing future internships involves helping students understand the necessity and value of lifelong learning. Accomplishing this task will also involve collaboration with the educational institution and the business.

In addition to readying students for higher education, we need to develop their basic skills essential for the increasingly sophisticated workplace. (Daggett, 1993). Internships allow students the opportunity to experience the work environment and the requirements for success. The future physician, lawyer, businessman, or engineer should have shadowing, mentoring, internships, part-time employment, and other business or industry experience just like the future computer technician or machinist (KCC, 2001). Meaningful internships require the management of multiple components: creating and maintaining business and industry partnerships, integrating the curriculum, and student orientation.

No universal model exists for recruiting business and industry partnerships and employer participation. A wide variety of roles employers play and the services they provide vary from program to program and from locality to locality due to the uniqueness of each program, the needs of the community, and the resources of the employer. Barriers that may influence employer participation can include economic uncertainty, training costs, organizational resistance, regulatory restrictions, and inadequate preparation of students (KCC,2001).

Meaningful involvement of business and industry in internships requires a plan and processes for building the system. Some objectives that may help guide building the new partnership in being mutually beneficial for all participants include:

1. Developing curricula and work plans that meet the needs of both the business and the school.
2. Clearly defining the roles of the participants and encouraging cooperation.
3. Determining whether any training will be needed and who will conduct it.
4. Developing an operational structure.
5. Developing an evaluation process for the partnership.
6. Generating opportunities for postsecondary education. (KCC, 2001)

When recruiting business and industry partners, target key employers and industries and provide a range of opportunities for involvement that benefit the employer. While it takes more work to arrange and monitor multiple placements in a number of small organizations compared to one large organization, recruitments in small organizations are necessary due to the volume of placements. This is especially critical in Kansas in the area of health care internships.

Key findings on business and industry partnerships from the Institute for Educational

Leadership research found:

1. Over 75 percent of employers, particularly those from large establishments, were motivated to participate in partnerships by an interest in performing a community service.
2. Employers rarely volunteer to participate in partnerships; they have to be persuaded to do so.
3. Employers usually respond more readily to other employers engaged in successful partnerships.

The Fourth R: Workforce Readiness, published by the National Alliance of Business, identifies six levels of involvement possible for business and industry in educational internships:

Level 6: Partners in Special Services provide short-term project or student-specific activities or resources to help with specific problems or needs (scholarships, fundraising, donating or sharing equipment, sponsoring career fairs, student organizations).

Level 5: Partners in the Classroom are volunteers who improve the learning environment by bringing their business expertise directly into the classroom.

Level 4: Partners in Teacher Training and Development are involved in providing faculty and advisor training and professional development opportunities for upgrading skills and increasing knowledge of workplace skills.

Level 3: Partners in Management provide the institution with management support and business expertise in a broad range of areas.

Level 2: Partners in Systemic Educational Improvement create initiatives in which business, education officials, and other community leaders identify the need for reform or improvement in the educational system and then work over the long term to make those major changes happen in the system.

Level 1: Partners in Policy provide collaborative efforts at the national, state, or local level among businesses, schools, and public officials that shape the public and political debate, bring about substantive changes in state or federal legislation or local institutional governance, and affect the overall direction of the educational system. As business and industry are recruited, keep in mind these six different levels of participation that will need to occur in your program.

Students will be more successful when oriented to the internship process. Ten guidelines are recommended by Jobs for the Future (KCC, 2001) in helping students orient themselves to the workplace environment:

1. Agreed-upon goals and the means of achieving them. A structured plan for the students' learning in the workplace.A focus on developing broad and transferable skills.
2. Orientation and ongoing support as needed.
3. The students should be oriented and prepared for their workplace assignments.
4. The students should receive the support and guidance of a caring adult in the workplace. Classroom activities should help students distill and extend lessons from the workplace.Students' learning in the workplace should be documented and assessed.
5. Ongoing coordination between the schools and workplaces.
6. Quality control mechanisms should be used.

Although students cannot get fired from school, they can get fired in the workplace. For that reason, the workplace provides the most realistic setting for the integration of academic and career skills. Integrating generic work skills in problem solving, communication, interpersonal relations, and learning how to learn in the context of work – or lifelong learning - are essential. For these reasons, curriculum activities must support the business as well as the academic mission of the institution. Designing curriculum requires the integration of academic materials with the skills and knowledge required to operate and sustain a business. Important aspects include: advising students, deciding what students should know and be able to do, bringing industry experts to advise on curriculum, develop classroom activities to reinforce workplace learning, incorporating lifelong learning and teamwork activities

Structuring the internship component involves an array of roles, tasks and responsibilities. These must be clearly understood and accepted by the appropriate partners before students are placed in the workplace environment. Key partners are: internship coordinator, the employer, worksite mentors, college administrators, faculty, advisors, students, and the program advisory committee. Major design decisions that affect the internship component must be made by the partnership. These decisions include:

1. Structure of the Workplace Component. Types of internship activities, structure of the internship, duration, credits, paid work.
2. Nature of the Internship. Job progression.
3. Employer Capacity and Program Management. Internship capacity per semester. Involving employees and their organizations. Worksite coordination. Assessment of workplace skills.
4. Identify the outcomes the student should learn and evaluation of outcomes. (KCC, 2001)

These guidelines for creating business and industry partnerships, integrating the curriculum, and student orientation will help establish meaningful and enriching partnerships in your program. Following will be a discussion of the three Kansas internship programs and their structures.

Emporia State University

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Cooperative Education combines practical work experience with formal schooling in a five-year program of alternating semesters of study and work with a cooperating employer. For the qualified student, the program provides an expanded college education and a direct avenue to a career. The work under this program is in, or closely related to, the student's field of study. Upon completing at least 3 work semesters under the alternating work schedule and becoming academically eligible for graduation, a co-op student is designated as a cooperative Education Graduate.

BENEFITS TO STUDENTS

- Test interests and career goals, improve retention and graduation rates.
- Exposure to leading edge technology.
- Develop a network of professionals.
- Apply classroom theory to "real" world challenges.
- Earn professional level salary.
- Accelerate career advancement after graduation and higher starting salaries upon graduation.

PROGRAM OPERATION

Students are employed in pairs with one working while an alternate is attending school. Approximate semester rotation dates are January 1, May 15, and August 15.

Students will:

- Rotate regularly.
- Complete three (3) work semesters to qualify as a Co-op graduate.
- Enroll at ESU for Co-op credit each work semester.
- Submit assignment packets.
- Remain with original Co-op employer throughout the program.

Employers must:

- Provide professional entry-level pay, supervised work experience directly related to a student's field of study.
- Plan structured work assignments that are progressive in providing professional work assignments and expectations for performance.
- Evaluate each student's work performance at the end of each work semester.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Complete Co-op Orientation Process.
- Earn a minimum of 30 credit hours.
- Maintain a 2.5 GPA or higher for Undergraduate; 3.0 for graduate students.

ACADEMIC CREDIT

- Students are enrolled in a one (1) credit hour Co-op course each work semester.
- A grade of S/U will be awarded at the completion of each work semester.
- Co-op credit may not count toward general education requirement; however, at the discretion of each Academic Division, it may be used towards university degree requirements.

THE WORK CURRICULUM

Upon completing CW186 and acceptance by a Co-op employer, the active Co-op student will rotate from school to work to school, etc., each semester. During work and school semesters, the student will be formally registered with the university. Each student who completes three (3) semesters as a registered Co-op student will be certified as a Co-op graduate with the diploma inscribed.

Students may begin their initial work semester during spring or summer semesters. Three basic examples of rotation are show.

Plan A			
	Summer	**Fall**	**Spring**
Year 1		S	S+P
Year 2	W	S	W
Year 3	S	W	S
Year 4	W*	S	S
Year 5	S*	S	

Plan B			
	Summer	Fall	Spring
Year 1		S	S
Year 2		S+P	W
Year 3	S	W	S
Year 4	W	S	W*
Year 5	S*	S	

Plan C (Recommended for Transfer Students)			
Year 1		S	S
Year 2		S	S
Year 3		S+P	W
Year 4	S	W	S
Year 5	W	S	

Codes:
S = School; S* = School Optional; W = Work; W* = Work Optional; P = Co-op Prep Course (CW186)

2 + 1 + 2 PROGRAM INDUSTRIAL MAINTENANCE TECHNOLOGY

Finney County Learning System/IBP, inc.

Background

In the fall of 1997, IBP, inc., the leading producer of beef products, approached the Finney County Learning System with a proposal to develop a training program (Center of Excellence) for industrial maintenance workers. IBP indicated a willingness to provide tuition for students in the program. Other Centers of Excellence have been established by the FCLS, but none had business/industry partners.

The two high schools and the community college were having difficulty recruiting students into the career track for industrial technology, which greatly reduces the number of technically-qualified applicants seeking employment in the maintenance departments at IBP. Many parents, high school instructors and counselors, and career advisors assume a 4-year college education is required to receive and maintain gainful employment. This sort of misinformation contributes to the declining number of high school students enrolling in technical programming at the high school level.

IBP oficials felt the availability of more qualified applicants for IBP maintenance positions would reduce the amount of internal training required, improve productivity, and greatly reduce downtime and inventory expenses. In the last 5 years IBP's plant maintenance employee turnover has risen 95%.

Continued discussions between IBP and school officials indicated the need for the following:

- Identification of math, reading, English and technical competencies needed for industrial maintenance positions at IBP
- Refinement of curriculum
- Development of an IBP career opportunities video
- Meeting of prospective students and parents
- Tour of plant facilities for prospective students and parents
- Development of a selection process for prospective students to include validation of successful completion of prerequisites, application, assessment of mechanical aptitude, iterview
- Establishment of advisory and steering committees
- Establish internship guidelines
- Train IBP mentors
- Provide for ongoing assessment and support of students
- Develop a student agreement concerning

These details accomplished, the Industrial Maintenance Technology Center of Excellence will be implemented in the fall of 1998.

IBP's Return on Investment:

- High school graduate enters IBP as a Level 5 maintenance technician
- Student who completes 1 year of college inters IBP as a Level 8 technician
- Trainees will have more comprehensive technical skills than those currently contained in the Level 8 training program and will be more capable of meeting the technical requirements for maintenance of automation systems.
- Employees who continue the community college track and complete a two-year Associate of Applied Science degree will, with on-the-job work, have skills equivalent to the Level 9 Master Mechanic category.

Evaluation/Measurement of Training Program Success

- IBP intern mentor evaluates the skill achievement level of the student and completes a skill check-off evaluation form.
- IBP maintenance entrance examination scores will be tracked, and comparisons made between those of the Center of Excellence program candidates and traditional-hire candidates.
- Measure 2+1+2 participants work performance and compare it against that of traditional hires.
- Evaluate and track turnover comparing Center of Excellence hires with traditional hires.

For more information, contact Sue Lee, Garden City Community College, 620-277-4401 or 620-276-9520.

Industrial Maintenance Technology

Center of Excellence

This program has been developed to help fill the growing need for people who are technically qualified for industrial maintenance positions.

The program consists of three years of training including a part-time internship in industry. Students who wish to make a commitment of two years of full time employment with IBP, inc. will have their tuition, books and fees paid by IBP. Students have a choice of taking Applied Physics at the high school level or Descriptive Physics at GCCC.

Prerequisites:

- ✓ Computer (such as a software applications course)
- ✓ Welding I
- ✓ Welding II (or concurrent enrollment during Year One)
- ✓ Math, Science, English (on target for graduation if a high school student)

Suggested Course Sequence:

Year 1:

Manufacturing Processes
Basic Pneumatics
Physics
Summer Seminar: Basic Hydraulics
Electricity I
Electricity II

Year 2:

Electronics I
Electronics II
Summer Seminar: Programmable Logic/Circuits
Industrial Maintenance
Digital Circuits
Internship

Year 3:

Advanced Hydraulics
Advanced Pneumatics
Programmable Logic Controls
Internship (20 hrs/wk @ $10.50/hour

Admission Process:

1. Meet all the above criteria
2. Complete a Finney County Learning System Center of Excellence application form (available in the counselor's office)
3. Complete an assessment of mechanical ability measured by the DAT or ASVAB
4. Successfully complete an interview with the FCLS instructors and employers
5. Be able to pay tuition/fees or complete agreement with IBP, inc.
6. Candidates will be notified in writing of admission acceptance/denial and reasons why

Postsecondary students may work part-time at IBP. They may also accelerate through their program of studies.

Wichita Area Technical College
COOPERATIVE EDUCATION

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION

Cooperative Education is a unique opportunity for juniors and seniors to blend career-related classroom instruction with on-the-job training (OJT). This helps prepare students for entry and advancement in their chosen careers.

Students earn high school credit while on the job. They attend class in the morning and are released in the afternoon for employment (i.e., OJT). Students in these programs are employed in large, well-known companies as well as smaller, family-owned businesses. In each case, the job becomes a laboratory in which students have the opportunity to:

- Explore careers.
- Apply skills learned in the classroom.
- Develop new skills pertinent to chosen careers.

IN CLASS

- Juniors receive *one* credit for class, *one* credit for employment, and work a minimum of 10 hours per week.
- Seniors recive *one* credit for class, *two* credits for employment, and work a minimum of 15 hours per week.

These elective credits count toward high school graduation. Additionally, some of the classes count for credit and advanced placement in a diploma or an associate of applied science degree program at WATC.

Classes are related to the employment experiences of students as job situations are brought into the classroom. During class, students:

- Develop new occupational skills.
- Practice human relations skills needed on the job.
- Acquire teamwork and decision making skills.
- Share and resolve job related concerns.
- Explore careers.
- Plan future education and employment goals.

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

Employment is secured by a written cooperative training agreement between the school and the employer. Through employment experiences, students:

- Receive elctive high school credit that counts toward graduation.
- Work with an experienced, friendly and helpful supervisor.
- Receive hands-on experience in the real world.
- Earn money (paid employment).
- Work in a job related to career interests.
- Continue in the job after high school.
- Explore career interests.
- Assume responsibilities.
- Build a work history/resume.

COOPERATIVE OCCUPATIONAL TRAINING

Related Careers

Aircraft Assembler, Brickmason, Carpenter, Caterer, Construction Supervisor, Electrician, Engineer, Firefighter, Health Care Technician, Industrial Designer, Machinist, Maintenance Technician, Mechanic, Roofer, Warehouse Technician.

Courses

The class and employment are co-requisite courses – one coursecannot be taken without the other:

Title	Course Level	
Cooperative Occupational Training 1	11	12
Cooperative Occupational Training 2	11	12
Cooperative Occupational Training 1 Jr Employment	11	
Cooperative Occupational Training 2 Jr Employment	11	
Cooperative Occupational Training 1 Sr Employment		12
Cooperative Occupational Training 2 Sr Employment		12

- Contact guidance counselor or business teacher for appropriate course number.

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SECTION V

Leadership and Organizational Change Track

Interdisciplinary Learning as Preparation for Leadership

Richard M. Ashbrook, Andrew J. Carlson, Robin S. Johnson, Daina McGary
Capital University

Dennis G. Carlson
The Carter Center, Emory University

Abstract

Five interdisciplinary practitioners — a psychologist, a historian, a social worker, a sociologist, and a physician — will present brief descriptions of programs that emphasize interdisciplinary learning as an integral ingredient for the education of leaders. A few basic principles of leadership training will place these programs in the context of contemporary thinking about leadership training, and, in turn, these themes will be extended into strategies for the formation of adult learning communities. The interdisciplinary reflections of the presenters will serve to initiate dialogue between session participants. In particular, we will be interested in helping one another identify the conditions at our institutions that enable and that thwart interdisciplinary leadership education.

Richard Ashbrook and Robin Johnson, a psychologist and social worker, respectively, will describe the L2000+ Leadership Academy, an example of interdisciplinary education in Central Ohio. Now in its fourth year, this academy was formed to prepare Ohio's future leaders of alcohol, drug addiction and mental health services, by providing innovative, individualized and diverse learning opportunities for middle- to higher-level leaders in behavioral health care. The formation of the curriculum will be described as an example of building an interdisciplinary, action-oriented program, and the assessment of Fellows' learning outcomes will be discussed. Implications for undergraduate learners also can be drawn from the Leadership Academy. A strong foundation in the liberal arts and the ability to conceptualize problems across disciplinary frameworks is the best preparation for interdisciplinary practice, as this approach helps students make the connections between their clients, the community and the world at-large.

Andrew Carlson and Daina McGary, a historian and sociologist, respectively, will explore ways in which adult undergraduate students use the writing of interdisciplinary degree plans to prepare leaders. These degree plans, which consciously link different disciplines, demonstrate some of the interdisciplinary possibilities at the undergraduate level. The review and approval process for these degree plans show how a consultative, interdisciplinary faculty panel can help students see connections among disciplines, and occasionally how panel deliberations reveal the personal and institutional barriers to achieving the interdisciplinary matrix.

Dennis Carlson, a physician, will reflect on his experience introducing the humanities and arts into curricula for health practitioners, first at Johns Hopkins University, and later in Ethiopia. History and language courses for health officer students, sometimes including historical field trips, were used to strengthen the understanding of the many cultural groups that comprise Ethiopian society. Popular arts, such as drama, poetry, music and dance, were introduced as a means for unschooled rural community health workers to identify significant health problems and explore possible healthcare solutions.

Leadership and Interdisciplinary Education

Our purpose here is not to review the extensive literature on leadership development or on interdisciplinary approaches to education, but rather to set out a few common terms and mention the work of a few others who may provide us with a starting point for our discussion.

For virtually all of human history, individuals have discussed the education of leaders, even while definitions of leadership were many and often confusing. The following short papers reflect on practitioner efforts to educate persons for leadership, particularly in the context of disciplinary bound institutions of higher education. One hypothesis that we wish to explore here is that one failure of the university system is that it promotes a narrow disciplinary approach to human problems that cannot educate persons for leadership and that alternative interdisciplinary programs have a better likelihood for success, particularly if they are rooted in a community with shared values and a common mission.

In his classic study, *Leadership* (Harper & Row, 1978), James MacGregor Burns defines leadership as "the tapping of existing and potential motive and power bases of followers by leaders, for the purpose of achieving intended change (p. 448)." Five characteristics, according to Burns, are associated with leadership (p. 452-455):

1. "Leadership is collective. 'One-man' leadership is a contradiction in terms. Leaders, in responding to their own motives, appeal to the motive bases of potential followers.
2. Leadership is dissensual. The dynamo of political action, meaningful conflict, produces engaged leaders, who in turn generate more conflict among people. Conflict relevant to popular aspirations is also the key democratizer of leadership. It causes leaders to expand the field of combat, to reach for more followers, to search for allies. It organizes motives, sharpens popular demands, broadens and strengthens values.
3. Leadership is causative. True leadership is not merely symbolic or ceremonial, nor are 'great men' simply the medium or mechanism through which social forces operate. The interaction of leaders and followers is not merely transactional or a process of exchange. The result of the interactive process is a change in leaders' and followers' motives and goals that produces a causal effect on social relations and political institutions. That effect ranges from the small and hardly noticed to the creative and historic.
4. Leadership is morally purposeful. All leadership is goal-oriented. The failure to set goals is a sign of faltering leadership. Successful leadership points in a direction; it is also the vehicle of continuing and achieving purpose.

5. Transforming leadership is elevating. It is moral but not moralistic. Leaders engage with followers, but from higher levels of morality; in the enmeshing of goals and values both leaders and followers are raised to more principled levels of judgment."

In short, leadership is not merely the wielding of power and manipulation. It involves transactional and transformational engagement with followers that result in achievements that are broadly embraced. Moreover, it must result in positive changes within the framework of ethical and moral justification. Alexander Astin and Helen Astin (Eds.) (2000), in *Leadership Reconsidered: Engaging Higher Education in Social Change* (W.K. Kellogg Foundation), establish four basic assumptions about leadership (p. 9):

- Leadership is concerned with fostering change.
- Leadership is inherently value-based.
- All people are potential leaders.
- Leadership is a group process.

Leadership is firmly grounded in a set of values. As a result, any educational enterprise that desires to nurture leadership must come to terms with the idea that leadership is value-laden. According to the Astins, leadership encompasses the following values (p. 11):

- To create a supportive environment where people can grow, thrive, and live in peace with one another.
- To promote harmony with nature and thereby provide sustainability for future generations; and
- To create communities of reciprocal care and shared responsibility where every person matters and each person's welfare and dignity is respected and supported.

From these basic assumptions and values, the contributors to *Leadership Reconsidered* flesh out a new definition of leadership, and around this definition construct a set of group and individual qualities that create a matrix of sorts in which constructs of leadership can be understood and fostered. Central to the definition is the recognition that effective leadership necessarily requires groups and individuals to function according to certain principles, possess certain qualities, and hold certain values. The qualities, for instance, the group must possess are (pp. 11-12):

- Collaboration
- Shared Purpose
- Disagreement With Respect
- Division of Labor
- A Learning Environment

Likewise, there is a set of qualities that individuals must possess, if the group is to reach a level of effectiveness. These include (pp. 12-13):

- Self-knowledge
- Authenticity/Integrity
- Commitment
- Empathy/Understanding of Others
- Competence

The contributors to *Leadership Reconsidered* go on to consider the interaction of these principles, qualities and values, and in ensuing chapters tackle the specific curricular and co-curricular features that help students realize their leadership potential. These authors firmly place leadership in the experience of higher education, arguing that "leadership development should be a critical part of the college experience (p. 17)," and observing that general education requirements, which present in many ways the richest opportunity for leadership development, often proceed without any consideration of the factors that underlie preparing leaders. Similarly, the role of the faculty in leadership development is explored by first reflecting upon the role of faculty in higher education, and then calling for a new balance between individual excellence and social responsibility, and between traditional scholarship and institutional and community service. The contributors identify two cultural traditions that prevent faculty from practicing transformation leadership: faculty's "excessive need for autonomy and their strong allegiance to the discipline. Disciplinary allegiance "is reflected in the strong departmental structures and the resulting institutional fragmentation and division that we find on many campuses. It also tends to create intense competition for resources, together with status hierarchies among the disciplines. Obviously, these structural divisions and subcultures can act as strong barriers to creating community, interdependence, and collective learning and action (p. 44)."

Then asking — can leadership be taught — Burns defines education "in the broadest and most fundamental way" as the totality of work, school, family and life experience. This is because leaders must "be whole" persons if they are to help "mobilize and elevate their constituencies (pp. 448-449)."

In the following essays practitioners from several disciplines reflect on their efforts to educate leaders, often in the face of challenges from within the American university system. One hypothesis that we explore is that one failure of the current university system — especially with regard to education for leadership — is that it promotes a narrow disciplinary approach to human problems. Another hypothesis is that self-consciously interdisciplinary approaches to higher education do better in preparing persons for leadership.

Reflections on the Multidisciplinary Major at Capital University – A. Carlson & D. McGary

As we approached our thinking about leadership and interdisciplinary studies, we did so in the context of reflection on what the multidisciplinary major has meant for students and faculty at Capital.

Over the last 22 years, hundreds of adult learners at Capital University have pursued multidisciplinary majors rather than majors in the traditional and professional disciplines. While often students' reasons for choosing a multidisciplinary major are pragmatic, the educational path can have integrity and result in interdisciplinary learning. The process of designing a degree plan and the reflection this requires about college level learning acquired especially through work produces unusually well integrated learners who are better prepared for leadership than they were at the beginning of their learning experience at Capital, and better prepared for leadership than they would have been if they had pursued a more traditional major.

One widely shared characteristic of adult learners who choose to pursue a multidisciplinary major is that they have come to a point in their work lives where the college credential is needed for their continued advancement. Usually adult learners will admit some deficiencies in their educations. But they are also clear that it is the credential — and the approval and authority associated with possessing a degree — that is most important to them. Put in other words, whatever learning they do is applied to a specific context of where they are as adults with work, family, and civic responsibilities.

Regardless of the student's age, selecting a major is a momentous, self-defining event. But it has different meanings for the traditional age and the adult student. For the 18-23 year old, it involves reflection on future plans, on academic abilities and preparation, on resources. The decision also begins initiation into a disciplinary club with very clear ideas about curriculum and specialties — ideas that are based on a sense of the history and intellectual development of the profession. For adults who have stopped out of college or never had the opportunity to declare a major, the moment comes at a different developmental stage and in a different context. This is usually not a time to begin all over again, as if at the beginning of college. It is rather a time for reflecting on what has been learned in the course of life, reflection based on the experience of work, on adult relationships, on citizenship, on military and community service, and on leadership and followership.

Often a disciplinary major presumes a narrow community, a prescribed curriculum, perhaps a longer road to the credential, which does not contribute to individual development. A major which is broader (multi-disciplinary or interdisciplinary) allows the learner to build directly on his/her experience, in the context of communities they have already established, using competencies they have attained, towards already envisioned goals. Depending on the individual, the self-designed major may be closer to the cutting edge of learning than he or she would have been within traditional disciplines, which often are burdened by agenda loaded down by the past and institutionally reinforced boundaries, such as in academic departments.

At Capital, the faculty of the Adult Degree Program developed, over a period of 20 years, a sense of interdisciplinary community that really was based upon the individualized degree planning. This common work resulted in a learner-centered, interdisciplinary culture that had four characteristics:

First, the curriculum specifically addressed the needs of adult, interdisciplinary learners. This began in the early 1980s with a course on experiential learning and portfolio development. Then in 1990 a course on degree planning and self-assessment was developed, in response to needs in these areas. Then came first one and then two courses in research methods and writing, along with a self-conscious focus on problem-based research.

Second, this curriculum then became the reason for an interdisciplinary community — in seminars and degree review committee meetings. For the adult learners as well as the faculty, these courses and learning processes became the heart of an interdisciplinary community of learning. Group discussions about degree plans, which all learners partake in as part of their introductory course (LPS 199), and then faculty committee meetings on degree plans, became a place for important discussions about disciplinary boundaries and about problems and issues that cut across these boundaries. Even though these discussions did cover tedious issues on distribution, minimal credits, prerequisites, they also opened up discussions about disciplinary boundaries and agendas and the larger questions that really cut across usual categories of thinking. For students and faculty, because these were largely local discussions that involved students and faculty from many disciplines, there developed a real sense of community.

Third, the interdisciplinary community produced a rich interdisciplinary conversation that extended to epistemology, paradigms, research, and the problems that our students focus on in problem-based research. Topics of conversation might begin in a seminar, move to a degree review committee meeting, and then return to the seminar with new perspective and reflection. Because a constant focus was individual degree plans and research agenda, it also remained student centered.

Finally, the interdisciplinary community had a special appreciation for General Education. Of course, the liberal arts education is not usually limited to the major. It also involves General Education of some sort. If it is in the General Education curriculum that the college or university puts its major effort to prepare students for life as leaders and citizens, then the question presents itself: does choice of a major have any influence on how a student approaches General Education?

Review of fifty randomly selected multi-disciplinary degree plans suggests that almost half of these students find ways to integrate General Education more into their thinking about their majors. Part of the explanation may be attributed to the age and the life experiences of the adult learner. Their capacity to recognize the integration of General Education with their disciplinary studies may be driven by a kind of developmental sophistication, a practiced ability to draw connections among ideas and extrapolate their application into meaningful practice. These adult learners are not "full members" of a disciplinary department; thus, they often remain unexposed to the battles over General Education's "encroachment" into the major curricula. Likewise, these students have not been firmly acculturated into the disciplinary exemplars and the propaganda about the superiority of one discipline's method over another's. The effort learners put into writing their degree plans and explaining these to a community of learners may also account for their connection between General Education and the discipline. Most traditional undergraduates simply are not invited to place their learning goals in this type of context; thus, they never write about the connections, and probably seldom consider them. For the adult learner who pursues the multi-disciplinary major, working out the degree plan is a fundamental task that occasions consolidation of prior learning outcomes and invites integration of General Education into the major. For the adult learner, the integration is not really new territory; thereby, their developmental richness. Already leading complex lives, the adult learner balances worlds of work, family and community. Education only stirs the mix.

Quite often the General Education courses are very relevant to their own preparations for leadership. Whether the topic is ethics, diversity, written and oral communication, critical thinking, or exposure to different epistemologies, a remarkable number of students observe that these courses are part of their preparation for positions of responsibility. They also present them as complementary to courses in business management that have a more tightly focused organizational purpose. This is consistent with Burns' observation that leadership takes place in community and must involve a moral dimension.

In conclusion, while students often choose multi-disciplinary majors for quite pragmatic reasons which have little to do with a desire to find interdisciplinary connections, and while faculty have been motivated to find majors that are most appropriate and attractive for adult learners, at Capital the multidisciplinary major helped to create an interdisciplinary community for learners as well as for faculty. This community has been particularly well suited for the education of leaders.

The Leadership Academy: Preparing Leaders – R. Ashbrook & R. Johnson

One example of interdisciplinary education, now in its fourth year, is a project in Central Ohio called the L2000+ Leadership Academy. The L2000+ Academy was formed to prepare Ohio's future leaders of alcohol, drug addiction and mental health services, by providing innovative, individualized and diverse learning opportunities for middle to higher level leaders in behavioral health care. The program is steered by a council of educational leaders, representing three universities[6], and chief executives from stakeholder agencies in the metropolitan area. The program participants, drawn from local agencies and called Leadership Fellows, typify adult learners. Some already are professionally degreed and licensed, though others have relatively little formal education and have risen through the direct care and administrative ranks of behavioral health care organizations to hold responsible positions.

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[6] The three universities represented on the steering council are The Ohio State University, Capital University and Franklin University. The Ohio State University's John Glenn Institute for Public Service and Public Policy coordinates the L2000+ Academy. For additional information on L2000+, the reader is referred to the L2000+ web page at http://www.osu.edu/glenninstitute/L2000/index.htm.

The L2000+ Leadership Academy[7] began in 1998 with a community needs assessment of over 60 behavioral health care leaders. A primary concern that emerged from conversations with existing leaders was: From where will the next generation of behavioral health care leaders come? The posing of this question led, in turn, to an articulation of key components and learning modalities that would be critical to the development of future behavioral health care leaders, though the process of curriculum development only proceeded after community stakeholders identified the skills, beliefs and values that they believed were integral to the new generation of emerging leaders. For a change, the shape of the curriculum was not deferred to the 'expert' academic specialists whose recipes for innovation tend toward single disciplinary ingredients, often mirrored reflections of their progenitors' training, and mollified in the Academy's slow-bake ovens fueled by slender professional journals and low-heat tomes that burn steady as a peat pot but put off little heat. Stakeholders – mental health leaders barely removed from the hot trenches of direct care and familiar with the flash points of community sentiment and the frazzled fiscal state of behavioral health care funding – saw to a brighter flame by igniting discussion with practical mandates for leadership. Around a giant conference table in a room plastered with poster board emerged a menu of sorts – a meal for emerging leaders, though admittedly no one was quite sure exactly how to prepare it or who would ultimately partake of the feast.

Five central goals, or desirable outcomes, emerged for the L2000+ Leadership Academy. These goals served as the framework for an emerging curriculum:

- Deliver a quality experience to learn valuable, contemporary knowledge and skills essential for emerging leaders in mental health, alcohol and substance abuse.
- Create networking opportunities to support long-term relationships of emerging leaders and current leaders.
- Develop a highly energized, empowered cadre of emerging leaders to seek and obtain leadership positions in mental health, alcohol and substance abuse, and related services.
- Develop an appreciation for and understanding of the crucial function of public service in the health and well being of the community.
- Build the leadership skills and capacity to guide service delivery in a constantly changing environment.

The leadership curriculum was eclectic to an extreme, which risks the lack of unifying principles, coherent themes, and solid outcomes assessment – potential pitfalls addressed more fully in ensuing paragraphs. The premise of the curriculum rested on an assortment of desirable encounters with ideas and people. In general terms, these included:

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[7] Core funding for the L2000+ Leadership Academy was provided by the Ohio Department of Mental Health, the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services, The Ohio State University, the ADAMH Board of Franklin County, and by a number of the local community mental health boards in Central Ohio. In addition, agencies sponsor employee-participants through a tuition payment of approximately $1,200.

- Articulation of a working base of knowledge, personal attributes, ethics and skills
- Identification of learning tracks comprised of newly created and existing courses and programs
- Integration of diversity and a variety of world views in all aspects of the initiative
- Creation of opportunities for dialogue with national and state leaders
- Application of technology and data analysis to refine communication and improve decision-making

More specifically, the year-long program for Leadership Fellows took the shape of monthly seminars, targeted encounters with national, state and local behavioral health care leaders, individualized assignment of coaches and mentors, and small group sessions on targeted skill development. A few of the monthly topics, which often were open to subsets of the larger behavioral health care community, illustrate the range of discussion:

- History and Contemporary Challenges of the Mental Health System
- Redefining Prevention
- Managing Diverse Human Resources
- Behavioral Health Care Financing at the Macro Level
- Building a Coalition of Legislative Action
- Management Versus Leadership
- The Consumer Movement and Organizational Leadership
- The Perspective of Mental Health Board Presidents
- Evidenced Based Practices in Behavioral Health

The Leadership Fellows were recruited from behavioral health care agencies, although no specific educational prerequisites were required for program participants. Rather, an extensive application process was developed that identifies individuals with the potential to emerge as behavioral health care leaders. As part of the application process, potential participants answer questions about their past leadership experiences, identify personal and professional goals for leadership development, and secure letters of organizational support. The Fellows are typical of adult learners in that they represent a variety of professional and personal backgrounds, and remarkably, many of the Fellows have followed nontraditional paths to reach their current positions. That is, the Fellows are not necessarily the product of undergraduate programs in the human services – indeed, some do not hold an undergraduate degree. Instead, Fellows are drawn from an assortment of backgrounds in direct service delivery, consumer groups and advocacy roles.

As initially suggested above, the curriculum is eclectic, and adding to its variation was the requirement of each Fellow to identify personally desired learning outcomes, through which Academy facilitators matched Fellows to mentors and coaches.

Thus, many of the learning objectives were truly individualized, complicating the assessment of learning outcomes. Additionally, each cohort of Fellows were asked to pursue a group project, either all working together or breaking into natural subgroups as a function of shared individual goals. Assessment of learner outcomes, as a result, could not easily be accomplished by relying on traditional value-added approaches as, for the most part, there was not a single curriculum with the exception of the monthly seminars, and by design, much of the learning was designed to occur in situational contexts and as a by-product of the relationships among Fellows with themselves, and between Fellows and their community coaches and mentors.

The assessment protocol that resulted took the form of a Leadership Portfolio, the purpose of which was to chronicle each participant's involvement, document each participant's learning outcomes, and assess the curriculum (both of the group and of the individual). In each portfolio Fellows identified personal, individualized leadership goals, pose professional development opportunities, and self-directed study through consultation with facilitators, mentors, and external experts. Fellows were invited to begin with the shared curriculum goals, but go beyond these by stating objectives specific to each Fellow's situation and vision of leadership. The portfolio was used to chronicle participation, and often the portfolio became the student's repository for program materials. The use of multiple methods of outcomes assessment assured a form of convergent validity of the technique, and finished portfolios usually contained combinations of annotated bibliographies (books and articles read with critical reflections), work samples (innovations realized by new learning; grants and project proposals; new management or intervention protocols), demonstration projects (descriptions of group projects undertaken as a result of new learning), critical self-assessment, and written pieces by facilitators and external assessors (usually chief executives of the Fellow's sponsoring agency or a mentor or coach with whom the Fellow studied).

Multi-disciplinary Education for Health Service Leadership – D. Carlson

Health care today requires participation of many different kinds of people playing a wide range of roles. Only a few of their tasks are entirely scientific or technical in nature. Although many students and educators act as if the only really important learning takes place in physical sciences and technologies, the impact on the "patient," in fact, may rest equally on other kinds of understanding and skills with which the health practitioner approaches the client. This is particularly true in leadership skills both for individuals and groups.

Leadership comes in many forms: decision-making, role-modeling, facilitation, mentoring, motivating, planning, evaluating, among many others. In health services, leadership is almost always shared in a teamwork model. Many tasks have functions that require social and psychological competencies to achieve objectives of treating an illness, rehabilitating a disabled person, or preventing the spread of an epidemic. In order to be maximally effective in a particular location, the health practitioner at least needs to know the culture of a particular setting, the backgrounds of individuals involved, and the behavioral norms that govern action patterns. Health professionals require a broad knowledge of alternative ways to manage unpredictable situations and an imagination to create new combinations of actions. Moreover, for maximum usefulness they need sensitized attitudes and motivation to act in compassionate, as well as efficient, ways.

What are sources for such a wide and probably essential array of knowledge, attitudes, and skills? Clearly the social sciences, humanities and arts have rich potentials as learning materials.[8] Usually it is necessary to demonstrate connections between various non-medical disciplines and professional problems and procedures which the health care student is expected to learn, especially if the learner is an undergraduate and has little or no experience working as a "professional." Actually it takes little imagination to open the "doors" of medical psychology, medical anthropology or medical sociology to the many areas that directly connect to the new students' expected changed behavior, roles, and problems they will confront. These may be the anxiety and alienation the patient feels in an emergency room, the "unbelievable" explanations of disease presented in a clinic to a person from a traditional society, or the confusing array of different kinds of disease care personnel in a hospital. Clear benefits develop when health practitioners understand the basics of group dynamics and interpersonal communication. With relatively little effort it is possible to find many relevant articles in periodicals and chapters in books which will broaden the perspective for new students and deepen insights for those with experience.[9]

It may require a little more reflection to make appropriate connections with the humanities and arts to education of health care learners. Philosophical and legal issues are ever more salient. Ethical problems are developing in so many areas that many health professional training centers have established major departments to address issues that frequently become public relations or legal problems. New philosophical and religious questions are asked as medical science and technology expand unanticipated possibilities both at the beginning and end of life. Understanding the historical aspects of diseases, therapies, professions and institutions adds to the comprehension of beginning students, as well as seasoned practitioners. Being able to put a puzzling event or a process into historical perspective often alleviates anxiety and discouragement. Even more benefits accrue to practitioners dealing with communities and populations that are always complex. What seemed to be an overwhelming situation becomes a little more comprehensible and less threatening to the person in a new role.

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[8] Donnie J. Self, (ed.) *The Role of the Humanities in Medical Education (*Bio-Medical Ethics Program, East Virginia Medical School, Norfolk, Virginia, 1978); Edmund D. Pelligrino, *Humanism and the Physician* (Knoxville, The University of Tennessee Press, 1979); Edward Quinn et al, eds., *Interdiscipline: A Reader in Psychology, Sociology, and Literature* (New York: The Free Press, 1972); Frances E. Aboud, *Health Psychology in Global Perspective* (Sage Publications, 1998).

[9] George M. Foster and Barbara Gallatin Anderson, *Medical Anthropology* (Knopf, 1978); Benjamin D. Paul, ed., *Health Culture and Community: Case Studies of Public Reactions to Health Programs* (Russell Sage Foundation, 1955).

The challenges of relating the arts to learning processes of health care students is perhaps still more thought provoking, even though there have been serious efforts in music, dance, art, drama and literature in the past fifty years developing bodies of knowledge and skills to form "new health care professions." These endeavors have met with only partial success and have limited application for special types of mental disorders and care in long-term facilities such as nursing homes, where they often play important parts in maintaining a "healthy" atmosphere.

However the arts can provide important learning for health care students about some of the deeper dimensions of the human condition, no matter what their eventual work will be. Exposure and periodic saturation of practitioner students in the various forms of the visual and performing arts can have decisive and useful impacts on their sensitivities and responses to the many different kinds of personal, family, community and public settings they enter. Though nearly impossible to evaluate in quantitative terms, I am convinced that many health professional students have been positively influenced by the use of different arts as learning media and methods over the past thirty years that I have been using them.

While I have utilized the social sciences and humanities in the United States and Ethiopia, I would like to present a few examples, which specifically used different forms of literature and drama. These I believe will illustrate my main points and indicate their wide applicability in many cultural settings.

Johns Hopkins University: My major exploration of the humanities and arts as they relate to health and health care began at the Johns Hopkins University in the establishment of a new School of Health Services, which opened its doors in 1971 to undergraduate baccalaureate students learning primary health care in a two-year upper division program. All students were required to take an "elective" in the arts or humanities taught by a faculty team consisting of a philosopher/nurse, a religion/literature instructor, a literature/counseling professional, an art historian, a science, medicine and women's historian, and myself, an anthropologically oriented medical historian/physician. One of the courses I developed and taught was entitled "Drama and Family Health." We read twentieth century American drama writers (Eugene O'Neill, Edward Allbee, Robert Anderson, Arthur Miller and others), principles of psychodrama methodology (Moreno), and in Family Therapy concepts used by Virginia Satir.[10] After reading these materials we discussed cases the students were involved with in the hospital, clinic or community. The final part of the course consisted of dramatic presentations by groups of students. They could chose to develop their drama either from health care settings or from their own personal family lives. Invariably students created dramas from their own family histories, which were deeply moving, instructive and seemingly therapeutic. To the best of my knowledge there were no negative results.

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[10] E. Thayer Gaston, *Music in Therapy* (New York, 1968); Virginia Satir, *Conjoint Family Therapy: A Guide to Theory and Technique* (Palo Alto: Science and Behavior Books, 1967); Dennis G. Carlson, "The Arts and Humanities in Primary Care Education," in Carlson et. al. , *The Art of Teaching Primary Health Care* (New York, 1982); Dennis G. Carlson, "Health, Art, and Drama: Underutilized Resources for Improved Quality of Life," in Brock and Harood, eds., *The Culture of Biomedicine: Studies in Science and Culture* (Newark, 1984).

Students began to reflect about the many crises and traumatic situations faced by their patients in health care settings in new and sensitive ways.

Addis Abeba University, Ethiopia: A few years later I taught a course in Health Education to graduate students (Master of Public Health) at Addis Abeba University in Ethiopia. Again, the development of a "drama" to be acted this time in an urban community was an essential part of the course. One year, students visited traditional birth attendants in an urban community near the university campus and learned about the midwives' main problems. Over the next three weeks they developed an exciting, tension-filled, tragic drama (which was also sometimes humorous) that they presented to a community audience where the midwives lived, followed by a lengthy and passionate discussion. Another year they met with families, which had at least one member under treatment for leprosy and listened to their experiences of isolation, stigmatization and ostracism. Later the graduate students presented a very poignant drama, followed by discussion, which provided important insights for both the students and community members.

All the students were mature health professionals who had worked in the national health care system for several years. They were quick and clear to declare that they had learned many valuable lessons from their community colleagues, which they could not have learned from other sources.

Yifatna Timuga Health District, Central Ethiopia: My wife (a social worker) and I joined the non-government organization, Save The Children, during the major drought and famine of the mid 1980s and were assigned to live in a remote rural setting, one of the hardest hit areas. Our roles were both relief and developmental, so we concurrently were supervising food distribution, medical treatment and family reunification, while participating in educational, agricultural, road building, ecological repair and health system rehabilitation. I concentrated my efforts on in-service training for all levels of health personnel, ranging from traditional birth attendants and community health agents to nurses, sanitarians and physicians, who were facing new and different kinds of crises than they had been prepared for in basic training programs.[11]

We collaborated with local Ministry of Health staff to develop ongoing in-service training programs for the various levels of health personnel. Traditional birth attendants and community health agents met monthly at the closest clinic to where they worked and participated in training activities that upgraded their quality of performance in cases such as malaria, diarrhea, trachoma and other prevalent illnesses. Every two months all salaried health personnel attended a two-day conference, which focused on current disease problems such as a malaria epidemic, as well as management problems, which were constraining the system. Every conference included a drama prepared and presented by headquarters' staff, which epitomized some of the more serious disease or management issues.

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[11] Beulah Downing and Dennis Carlson, *Notes and Guidelines for Developing Training of Trainers Programs: With Particular Focus on Community Health Care in Ethiopia* (Bainbridge, Island, WA, 1999). For information on this aspect of using popular folk art in community based health programs, this manual is available from the authors and provides further explanation and details on how it was used in Ethiopia. Please correspond with Dennis Carlson, 480 Robinwood Drive, Bainbridge Island, WA, 98110.

Perhaps the most memorable events took place at the annual primary health conference when about four hundred health workers gathered for four days of in-service training concerning current health and management problems. The high point of the conferences were the productions by ten to twelve groups of health workers from different areas, who addressed crucial issues using a variety of traditional folk art formats, including story telling, poetry, music, dance, humorous games and a several kinds of drama, all of which they had adapted or created themselves. One particularly powerful production was by a group of elderly traditional midwives who acted as prostitutes in a play set in a rural bar where they were intensively exposed to HIV/AIDS. Another afternoon, as the closing ceremony was about to begin, I saw a large group of older women singing and dancing their way to the assembly hall. As they got closer I could make out the words being sung in Amharic, "We are so happy, it is raining honey, not rain!" They had been moved and motivated by events of the conference and were overflowing with good cheer and happiness. I am certain they learned many lessons about essential health care and behavior at deep levels during those four days as indicated by their behavior which will not be forgotten.

Conclusions: Significant progress has been made in recent decades in establishing social science study as highly useful, if not absolutely essential, components in education of health practitioners, both in basic and continuing training. Likewise the benefits of the humanities, particularly in philosophy, ethics, history and law, have been recognized by many leading health science centers. Few experienced educational leaders today hold that physical sciences and technological training are sufficient for preparation of health practitioner students. The necessity of understanding the cultural and social environment is now quite broadly assumed to be true. However these beliefs are based on the understanding that cognitive learning is virtually all that students need, even though the reader/student may be deeply moved occasionally by historical or anthropological studies. This section of the presentation has used drama and literature as prime examples of arts useful in educating health practitioners. Some brief vignettes and accounts from two societies have been included. One of the primary assertions of this paper is that studies aimed at influencing the affective, attitudinal, and value systems of learners can have profound and positive impacts at all stages of their careers.

Beginning Points for Discussion

Academic disciplines serve multiple purposes and the study of their emergence, maintenance and defense yields insights into the complicated political, social and scientific agenda that sustain the construction of knowledge into compartmentalized units. The Academy, through its administrative, organizational and fiscal structures, and professional bodies, such as scientific organizations, academic journals, accrediting agencies and credentialing authorities, usually enforce strict adherence to disciplinary ideals. These ideals sometimes serve high purposes like adherence to standards of competence for consumer protection, but not always. Disciplines, and their professional participants, also are self-serving, restricting competition and preserving scarcity of access. As a result, higher education often dissuades, albeit sometimes unintentionally, truly interdisciplinary analysis and subtly suppresses the emergence of interdisciplinary curricula that foster leadership development and social change.

Of course the advantages of interdisciplinary studies remain so apparent and compelling, at least to a dedicated minority of educational and professional practitioners, that such programs persist as a peripheral thread that both stitches and unravels the disciplinary edge. Many efforts toward interdisciplinary analysis yield patchworks, the tying of disciplines to one another by either their method or content, forming a kind of multidisciplinary quilt, but sometimes interdisciplinary education and its corresponding professional practice weaves, rather than quilts, forming new fibers ideally suited for application. Leadership development is one of these new fabrics that rely on interdisciplinary conceptions of the world and that force us, as educators, to be more explicit about our purpose, our values, and ambitions, and in so doing, to reach for collaboration with our students and our communities to promote change.

This paper has a considered a few examples of interdisciplinary training for leadership. From our discussion, we hope that panel participants and attendees will have been able to identify some of the key issues that sustain and thwart the practice interdisciplinary leadership education, and we invite, a discussion around some of the following themes:

- What is the relationship between leadership development and the respective missions of our institutions of higher education?
- To what extent should leadership development be the responsibility of American higher education?
- In what ways does our conception of leadership depend on interdisciplinary education?
- What aspects of our current academic culture sustain and thwart interdisciplinary bases of leadership development?
- What lessons can we extract from our institutions' successes and failures with interdisciplinary approaches and leadership education?

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Putting the Focus on Organizational Learning: A Perspective on Achieving and Sustaining Change in Higher Education

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We are attracted to and beset by change. In spite of the tremendous resources and time invested in organizational change projects, change efforts are seldom-successful (Kotter, 1996; Pascale, Millemann, & Gioja, 1997). Even when initially successful, change is difficult to sustain (Curry, 1992; Levine, 1980; Marsick & Watkins, 1990; Rowley & Sherman, 2001). Research suggests that sustained organizational learning is essential to successful change. Knowledge about organizational change and how to sustain it emerges in the intersection of sociology, higher education, and organization theory. A review of the literature follows with particular attention to sustaining change in American higher education settings.

Organizational Change in Higher Education

As organizations, colleges and universities are distinctive. This paper begins with a discussion of colleges and universities as loosely coupled systems with diffused decision making, as well as goal ambiguity. Organizational change literature that is relevant to higher education is presented. Strategies and change models that are of interest to those undertaking change efforts, as well as studies of innovation are considered. Finally, indicators of successful change are distilled from the recent research.

Weick (1976; 1982) and Clark (1970; 1983a; 1983b; 1984; 1987) examine features of higher education are examined from different perspectives. Weick's description of educational organizations as loosely coupled systems (1976) is the starting point for much research and discussion about colleges and universities. Open and natural systems ideas (Miller, 1978; Scott, 1981) provide the background for Weick's observations. Loosely coupled systems can have highly accurate environmental sensing and make small adjustments easily; however, they have more difficulty diffusing a major change throughout a system. Adaptation to maximize current opportunities and adaptability to future opportunities requires trade-offs between stability and flexibility. Weick (1982) suggests that organizational change should be "centralized when subunits adjustments can have discontinuous, long-term effects at considerable expense and decentralized when adjustments have continuous, abbreviated, inexpensive effects" (p. 390).

Clark (1983a), writing with an institutional perspective (Perrow, 1979; Selznik, 1957) describes higher education as a loosely coupled system in which ambiguity results in goals that are only "softly focused." He proposes that the "fundamental adaptive mechanism of universities is the capacity to add and subtract some fields of knowledge and related units without disturbing all of the others" (Clark, 1983a). The higher education system is comprised of four different horizontal and vertical dimensions: sectors of institutional type; hierarchies; sections of departments, chairs, and institutes; and tiers of undergraduate, graduate, and professional education. The matrix of academic discipline and institutional enterprise that dominates universities can, from Clark's point of view, encourage several kinds of change: grassroots innovation, innovation by persuasion, incremental change, boundary-leaking change, and invisible change (1984).

Numerous practitioners and researchers (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Birnbaum, 1988; Clark, 1998; Cohen & March, 1974; Duderstadt, 2000; Eckel, Green, Hill, & Mallon, 1999; Hearn, 1996) examine connections between leadership in higher education and successful institutional change. Denis, Lamothe, and Langley observe that loose coupling may encourage local incremental adaptation, but it does not facilitate conscious collective action (2001). These researchers propose that three levels of "coupling" must occur at the same time to permit change: within the top leadership team, between the leadership team and its internal organizational constituents, and between the leadership team and the external constituents of the organization. Leadership attentive to the distinctiveness of higher education systems is crucial. How is strategic change achieved where objectives are divergent, power is diffuse, and leadership roles are shared? How do institutions develop enough coherence among their parts to allow deliberate strategic change? On Change III, the "primer" on change for colleges and universities published by the American Council on Education (ACE), suggests that change in higher education is made complicated by autonomy and independence between units and by diffused decision making (Eckel et al., 1999). The authors present strategies and case examples for large-scale change that arose out of the ACE Project on Leadership and Institutional Transformation. The strategies identified in the project are using change teams charged with strategic purpose, engaging the campus community, and aligning time, resources, and attention with a major change effort.

Other work on higher education and change draws attention to aspects of culture, structure, and environment. Building on Tierney's work regarding higher education cultures (1988), Bergquist (1992) proposes four competing cultures of the academy: collegial culture, managerial culture, developmental culture, and negotiating culture. Examining culture and change, Bergquist observes all four cultures existing in tension with each of other in colleges and universities. Additionally, Bergquist identifies three institutional domains: structure, process, and attitude. The cultures of an institution are expressed in each domain. As he focuses on change in institutions, Bergquist asserts that organizational change is necessary in three domains: structure, process, and attitude. Process change must be coupled with structural change in order for change to be sustained (1992).

Analyses of the external environment of higher education and responses to environmental change by institutions are conducted by Cameron (Cameron, 1983; Cameron & Smart, 1998) and by Clark (1996, 1998). The shift from a time of growth in the economy and in higher education to particularly challenging conditions for higher education in a postindustrial environment is the focus of Cameron's work (1992). The demands on higher education by societies are increasing at the same time as institutional resources are diminishing. Clark characterizes the changing relationship between higher education and its environment as developing:

> a deepening asymmetry between environmental demand and institutional insufficiency. So much is now demanded of universities that traditional ways prove inadequate. Universities require not only an enlarged capacity to respond to changes in the external worlds of government, business, and civic life but also a better honed ability to bring demands under control by greater focus in institutional character. Strongly needed is an overall capacity to respond flexibly

> and selectively to the changes taking place within the knowledge domains of the university world itself. (1998, p. xvi)

There are many theories of change and approaches to organizational change. Two recent literature reviews focus the research in organizational change (Kezar, 2001; Pettigrew, Woodman, & Cameron, 2001). New studies of "changing" are needed that attend to (a) multiple contexts and levels of analysis, (b) change processes and organizational performance outcomes, (c) the interconnection of contexts, content, and change processes over time (Pettigrew et al., 2001), and (d) strategies for double-loop learning in institutions (Kezar, 2001).

In an attempt to align theories of individual, group, and organizational change, Van de Ven and Poole (1995) propose that each change theory be classified as a life-cycle theory, teleological theory, dialectical theory, or evolutionary theory. Each of these ideal theories operates with either a unit of analysis of single entities or multiple entities and with a specific process of change that is governed by a "motor" or generating mechanism representing a different mode of change (1995). It is difficult to provide a simple overview of their work; however, one can imagine a continuum with theories regarding individuals (single entities) and theories regarding groups and organizations (multiple entities). Life-cycle and teleological theories relate to individuals; evolutionary and dialectical theories relate to groups and organizations. The ideal theory categories group differently regarding their modes of change: Life-cycle and evolutionary theories have a prescribed mode of change; teleological and dialectical theories operate in a constructive modality. Second-order change is an example of the constructive modality because it involves altering assumptions that have guided behavior. When observing colleges and universities with this rubric in mind, one can anticipate approaches to change grounded in evolutionary theories demonstrating prescribed, incremental change and approaches to change that are grounded in dialectical theories demonstrating constructed, second-order change.

Two theoretical approaches stand out as particularly useful in this lit review: institutional and cognitive. Using Van de Ven and Poole's (1995) rubric, institutional theory is an evolutionary theory and the cognitive approach is dialectical. Each approach is briefly presented here with attention to its application to higher education.

Institutional theory provides a strong sociological framework for examining organizational context and organizational action (Clark, 1970, 1998; Cohen & March, 1974; March & Olsen, 1976; Perrow, 1979; Selznik, 1957). A significant feature of neo-institutionalism is attention to institutional context. The focus is on legitimacy, embeddedness of organizational fields, and the centrality of classification, routines, scripts, and schema (Kraatz & Zajac, 1996; Powell & DiMaggio, 1991; Scott, 1987). Recognizing that institutional theory is not ordinarily a theoretical lens for studying change, Greenwood (2000) discusses "contextual" change that fits within a template or archetype of an institution and "radical" change that achieves a new template. Contextual change is evolutionary and fits within the template of the institution. Radical change is uncommon. Achieving a new template requires vision, initiative, and the "capacity for action" (p. 325) within the organization. "Capacity for action" is Greenwood's enabling dynamic for managing "the transition process from one template to another" (p. 325). From this perspective, organizational change involves designing new institutional structures and systems. Successful change requires new competencies and skills within the institution.

A cognitive approach grounded in a constructivist perspective provides a lens for theory and research in organization theory, strategy, organization change, and organizational learning (Argyris, 1990, 1999; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Bergquist, 1993; Morgan, 1986; Senge et al., 1999; Weick, 1995). Particular attention is given to cognitive processes and theories of action utilized by individuals, groups, and organizations and to the outcomes of these processes (Argyris, 1983, 1990; Senge, 1990). Individuals and groups provide explanations for events from their perspective construct images of the organization rather than share one unifying organizational reality. Much discussion occurs as individuals and groups engage in sensemaking, interpreting events, and assigning meaning to these events. Inquiry into intentions, assumptions, actions, and outcomes receives significant focus. Recent work with a cognitive perspective addresses challenges of change (Senge et al., 1999), understanding change in higher education (Rowley & Sherman, 2001; Simsek, 1997), decision-making and strategic choice (Huff & Huff, 2000; Rowley & Sherman, 2001), sensemaking and strategic change (Gioia & Thomas, 1996), and leading change (Duderstadt, 2000; Kotter, 1996).

Inquiry and dialogue enable organizational members to examine assumptions and strategies, and to plan, implement, and sustain change. Single- and double-loop learning describe how individuals and organizations inquire, learn, and change (Argyris, 1983). Numerous writers explore dialogue (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Crossan, Lane, & White, 1999; Dixon, 1994; Marsick & Watkins, 1999; Senge, 1990). Further discussion of organizational change and organizational learning is presented in next section of this paper.

Scale (or extent) of change is approached variously by researchers (Cerych, 1984; Goodman, 1982; Huff & Huff, 2000). A continuum indicating scale can be imagined ranging from individual, group, and organizational/institutional to sectors of institutions, and then, to all of higher education as an industry. Many institutional changes occur among groups and within a specific institution (Eckel et al., 1999). Some changes occur across sectors of institutions (Finkelstein, Seal, & Schuster, 1998; Pickens, 1995; Rowley & Sherman, 2001). Taking a different approach in a study of innovation in higher education, Cerych (1984) determines the extent of innovation by evaluating three dimensions of change: depth, breadth, and level. Level of change corresponds to aspects of scale, addressing the involvement of individuals, units, an institution, a sector of institutions, and/or all of higher education as a system. Depth addresses the deviation from prevailing organizational practices, and breadth addresses the number of fields affected (p. 24). For example, one can examine an innovation to incorporate assessment of student learning in major programs (breadth) at state universities (level of change). With this approach, the depth of the innovation describes the changes to prevailing practice that are required by the assessment innovation.

Levine (1980), Seymour (1988), Curry (1992), Smith (1993), Lichtenstein (2000), and Jenniskens (2000) also examine innovation. The research suggests that successful innovation may occur more frequently at the fringe of a population of institutions rather than at large, mainstream campuses (Smith, 1993). Lichtenstein's (2000) work on self-organized transition indicates that innovation in a complex system is most successful when the emergent order builds on resident strength and is congruent with the principles and values of the organization. The third stage of Lichtenstein's three-stage process of change, emergence of a new configuration, is akin to achieving a new template (Greenwood & Hinings, 2000). It also bears similarity to recent research in strategic choice theory (Huff & Huff, 2000) discussed in the next section. Beyond alignment with an institution's principles and values, an innovation must be institutionalized, brought within the institution's boundary. An innovation that is not embedded in an institution will fail (Curry, 1992; Levine, 1980).

Behavioral changes and performance outcomes, as well as shifts in values, assumptions, and approaches to organizational inquiry, may indicate successful organizational change. Organizational performance is the indicator of change that Schwandt and Marquardt (2000) focus on. One can examine changes in outputs as indicators of change. Structural changes seem to indicate change; however, structural and procedural change are actually reconfiguring the internal environment (Simsek & Louis, 2000). Changes in organizational values, assumptions, and approach to inquiry precede changes in organizational actions.

If one considers that successful organizational change requires changes in values and assumptions, it is important to identify how changes as deep as these are brought about. Studies examined in this literature review suggest that understanding changes in institutional context, examining assumptions, practicing and sustaining new competencies, crossing disciplinary boundaries, reconceiving the institution and its future, and re-invigorating institutional "steering" are necessary for successful institutional change (Argyris, 1990; Clark, 1998; Greenwood & Hinings, 2000; Normann, 1985; Rowley & Sherman, 2001; Simsek & Louis, 2000). Further discussion on these ideas follows.

Links Between Organizational Change and Organizational Learning

Examining change and learning is complex and the language that is evolving in the literature and research reads like jargon to those outside of the immediate arena. Here, the discussion of first- and second-order change and single- and double-loop learning may also sound like jargon, but they are significant concepts in the literature. Categories of change and categories of learning are presented, along with research suggesting that organizational change and organizational learning proceed together.

First- and second-order change and single- and double-loop learning are categories for the degree of change or learning being reported in a project. First-order change is instrumental, incremental, developmental, evolutionary, programmable, and linear. First-order change utilizes accepted heuristics, formulas, and approaches. It is the kind of change that fits the current framework of the organization and makes up much of the day-to-day change there. It applies what is already known, detects and corrects errors or mismatches in performance, and is intended to accomplish current organizational policies or goals. Higher education examples of first-order changes include adding, eliminating, and revising courses, programs, departments, and schools (Kezar, 2001; Seymour, 1988). Other examples of first-order change are modifying strategies, altering procedures and practices, and combining or separating processes or entities when the theory of action remains or underlying assumptions and values of the system remain unquestioned (Argyris, 1990, 1999; Argyris & Schön, 1996).

First-order change is often aligned with the concept of single-loop learning. Single-loop learning occurs within an organizational framework that is already established when the framework itself is unchallenged and unchanged by learning. The classic example of single-loop learning, borrowed from cybernetics, presents the thermostat as a single-loop learner that detects when a room is "too hot" or "too cold" and automatically adjusts the room temperature. The thermostat does not examine or question why the room setting is at 68°. Questioning an underlying assumption requires a double-loop learner (Argyris, 1999).

Improving and enhancing institutional efficiency and effectiveness is an example of first-order change and single-loop learning when organizational inquiry detects a mismatch between desired performance and results and adjustments are made to subsequent actions. The fundamental values driving the desired performance remain unchanged. Enhancing efficiency and effectiveness requires double-loop learning when questions arise about how and why efficiency and effectiveness are defined and understood in particular ways in the institution, when outcome measures are identified differently, and when changes occur in organizational outcomes. In this example, then, incremental and developmental first-order change is linked with double-loop learning.

Argyris (1999) distinguishes between two types of double-loop learning. In the first type, change occurs in organizational outcomes with the use of inquiry. In the second type, the fundamental values that drive organizational inquiry are changed and hence, the theory-in-use and the inquiry itself are changed. With this perspective on change and learning, change requiring double-loop learning can occur without deep change in the values and practice of organizational inquiry. Argyris suggests that this first type of double-loop learning can produce temporary change and "limited" learning because the underlying theory-in-use for organizational inquiry is not changed (p. 48). Most of the research draws attention to the first kind of double-loop learning—evidenced by changes in outcomes. It is much more challenging to undertake and observe the second kind of double-loop learning—evidenced by a different kind of organizational inquiry (Huff & Huff, 2000). Sustaining organizational change depends on an organization's continuing ability to engage in rigorous double-loop inquiry. It is this second type of double-loop learning that is necessary for second-order change and that Torbert (Fisher, Rooke, & Torbert, 2001) describes and Kezar (2001) wants new research to examine. Kezar inquires what strategies there are for double-loop learning in institutions. Creating and sustaining conditions for rigorous organizational inquiry is necessary for double-loop learning. These conditions require conscious support and continuous practice by leaders and participants in institutional deliberations.

Using different language for similar concepts, Senge (2000) distinguishes between adaptive and generative learning. Adaptive learning can be aligned with single-loop learning and involves adaptive and incremental change within the current organizational framework. It is generative learning, Senge proposes, that produces enhanced organizational capability. One can see an alignment between Argyris's double-loop learning and Senge's generative learning. Generative learning, double-loop learning and second-order change each require examining assumptions, surfacing and challenging mental models, and acting on what is learned.

Second-order change is transformational and irreversible; it involves changing the theory of action or underlying assumptions and values of an organization (Bergquist, 1993; Kezar, 2001). These deep changes unfold and become visible in the organization as changes to mission, vision, culture, structures, processes, performance and behavior. Cases of second-order change in universities are provided in Clark's recent study of entrepreneurism and university transformation (1998, 2000). In five European universities, the "pathways of transformation" that Clark identifies include a strengthened steering core, an expanded developmental periphery, a diversified funding base, a stimulated academic heartland, and an integrated entrepreneurial culture (p. 5). He finds that "transformation occurs when a number of individuals come together in university basic units and across a university over a number of years to change, by means of organized initiative, how the institution is structured and oriented" (p. 4). The university transformation that Clark describes is one in which the institution is deeply and fundamentally changed.

> Without doubt, significant innovation in the character of a university means that some core tasks and some deep structures are altered to the point where the long-term course of the organization is changed. Such transforming work must be done locally, in the university itself. It must extend over years that often become decades. The sustained work calls for collective action leading to new practices and beliefs, steps that are entrepreneurial in character, with much risk-taking and flexible adjustment along the way (p. 8).

The transforming that Clark describes is an example of double-loop learning or generative learning.

In a recent study of second-order change and strategic choice, Huff and Huff (2000) examine individual, group, firm, and industry change. They develop a four-state model for change in individuals and groups and align it with a four-state model of strategic organizational change. Both models link change and learning and are empirically tested in the pharmaceutical industry. The four-state model for individuals and groups is: 1) the stable state with incremental adaptation within an accepted framework, 2) the process of deciding to attend to unanswered questions, 3) the stage of envisioning second-order change alternatives, and 4) the honeymoon in the new framework. The four states of the organizational model are: 1) "business as usual" with incremental adaptation within an accepted framework, 2) the process of deciding to consider second-order change, 3) the stage of envisioning second-order change alternatives, and 4) the honeymoon for a new strategic framework. In both models, inertia is defined as commitment, and it grows over time (2000). Second-order change is "more likely as cumulative stress exceeds cumulative inertia—if an alternative strategy appears to reduce stress" (p. 106). Of particular interest is the focus Huff and Huff give to deciding to pay attention to that which is unanswered by the current framework. The decision to pay attention and to let in the cues that everything is not all right indicates a shift that Huff and Huff use as a marker in the change process.

Organizational change occurs every day. It is simple enough when the change needed is detected and corrected within the current organizational framework. Deciding to pay attention to unanswered questions, realizing that the current framework is no longer adequate, examining the assumptions of the framework, and exploring alternatives are the challenging work of double-loop learning and second-order change. From this vantage point, one can imagine that organizational learning makes organizational change possible.

Sustaining Change in Higher Education

The catalyst for this review of the literature is uncovering what is known about sustaining successful change. The review includes the larger organizational change literature in order to capture research that could be useful in higher education settings. Of particular significance to sustaining change are sustaining an institutional practice of inquiry and dialogue, utilizing action learning in an on-going way, and institutionalizing and embedding changes in the structure and culture of the college or university. A discussion of these ideas follows.

For researchers and writers with a cognitive perspective, dialogue has a significant role in the change process. Collective learning is necessary for effective change; learning requires developing and exercising reasoning that is made explicit, challenged, met with dissonance, and honed (Dixon, 1994). Beyond inquiring differently in order to learn collectively and to successfully undertake organizational change, Argyris (1990; 1996) and Senge et al. (1999) advocate that continuing to reason, examine, and dialogue is necessary to sustain change. Ford and Ford (1995) consider organizational change as a communication-based and communication-driven phenomenon, and Bergquist (1993) reflects on organizations as conversations. Bergquist proposes that conversation sustains integration among the differentiated parts of a postmodern organization. Conversation, or dialogue, is presented as the central ingredient of organizational culture.

Dixon (1994) defines organizational dialogue as "interaction in a collective setting that results in mutual learning upon which the organization can act" (p. 83). Dialogue is the central vehicle for collective interpretation of meaning in an organization (Bergquist, 1993; Dixon, 1994). Senge and his associates (Kofman & Senge, 1993; Senge, 1990; Senge et al, 1994) develop the significance of dialogue to organizational change and learning. With a focus on dialogue as an aspect of sustaining change, one's attention is drawn to the challenge of sustaining spaces within an institution in which authentic conversations occur and new ideas and actions can emerge.

A strong case is made for action inquiry or action learning as an organizational practice that generates and sustains organizational change and learning (Garratt, 1987; Revans, 1977; Revans, 1982). The literature spans higher education and business organizations (Fisher et al., 2001; Grieves, 2000; Schaafsma, 1997; Schwandt & Marquardt, 2000; Torbert, 1991). One can see alignment between the ideas of double-loop learning, generative learning, action learning, and action inquiry. Although Kurt Lewin coined the phrase "action learning," the work of Reg Revans provides the foundation of knowledge of action learning (1977, 1982). Enhancing multi-disciplinary team learning by introducing unfamiliar problems in unfamiliar settings, Revans encourages new thinking.

Similar to action learning, action inquiry (Fisher et al., 2001; Reason & Bradbury, 2000) utilizes three "fundamentals" to make personal and organizational transformation possible: widening awareness of assumptions held by self and others, personal systems inquiry, and improving the quality and effectiveness of language. Marsick and Watkins (1999) propose seven "action imperatives" for sustained organizational change and learning: creating continuous learning opportunities, promoting inquiry and dialogue, encouraging collaboration and team learning, creating systems to capture and share learning, developing collective vision of the organization, and connecting the organization to its environment (p. 13-14). With a focus on action learning and action inquiry, indicators of organizational change and learning are accounts of personal/professional learning that result in different and new interactions, new ways of thinking, and different organizational consequences.

Significant change projects are often begun with pilot projects and innovations of different kinds. Two studies address the terminating and sustaining of innovations in higher education (Curry, 1992; Levine, 1980). Curry's monograph "Instituting enduring innovations" (1992) sets forward an innovation model with three stages: mobilization, implementation, and institutionalization. Like Levine (1980), Curry stresses the importance of the third stage, institutionalization, for sustaining successful institutional innovations. Institutionalizing an innovation involves boundary convergence between the innovation and the organization. Compatibility of the innovation with the values and norms of the institution, as well as innovation profitability, are significant factors in sustaining an innovation and incorporating it into the on-going life of an institution.

The importance of change being embedded in an organization's culture or structure is suggested by several studies (Clark, 1998; Lipshitz & Popper, 2000). The necessity of attaching change to structural vehicles emerges in Clark's study of successful innovations in five universities (1998), cited earlier in this paper. Clark studies the concrete aspects of academic organizations: offices, budgets, outreach centers, and departments. He observes that organizational change in higher education is "sustained when it acquires specific carrying vehicles. Significant change in universities has definite organizational footing" (1998, p. 128). Another vein of research suggesting the need to anchor change and learning is developing in healthcare and may have application to higher education (Lipshitz & Popper, 2000; Popper & Lipshitz, 1998). In their structural and cultural approach, Lipshitz and Popper propose that a "learning culture" is essential to achieving and sustaining organizational learning and change (2000). A learning culture includes a commitment to learning, valid information, transparency, and accountability (p. 181). Because organizational learning is social, cognitive, and structural, researchers look for "organizational learning mechanisms" that can be embedded in a learning culture (Lipshitz & Popper, 2000).

University administrators understand that planning and implementing change are distinct from sustaining it. The literature reviewed here makes an explicit connection between organizational learning and organizational change. Further, it suggests that continued learning can be connected to sustaining change. These ideas provoke a focus on organizational learning that, prior to now, has seemed, peripheral to the business of innovation in higher education.

Conclusion

The literature demonstrates that organizational change and organizational learning are inextricably linked. The challenge of successful change is less planning and implementing and more developing and sustaining new ways of seeing, deciding, and acting. Successful change is about learning enough collectively that organizational consequences and outcomes change. Sustaining change in higher education is dependent upon sustaining the conditions of learning in an institution. The researchers and writers reviewed here would urge those in higher education committed to successful institutional change to be rigorous in inquiry, as well as becoming skillful in dialogue and fearless in examining the institution in the context of its environment.

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Figuring Out What Matters in Collaborative Programs

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Introduction

Attempting to partially replicate a program, transfer only some of its curriculum, or change any of its form logically would be expected to result in partial and uncertain outcomes. However, we believe this is done frequently, if inadvertently. We have recently done it!

One of us directs and both of us teach in the Master of Science in Professional Leadership Program (PRL) at Carlow College in Pittsburgh. The program was established in January 1995 and since then has enrolled more students each year than any other graduate program at the school. In 2001 we established a joint degree with the Graduate Nursing program, a Masters of Science in Nursing Leadership (MSNL). The MSNL students take five of our six core courses. We also have had students from other graduate programs enroll in some of our core and concentration courses.

A number of problems presented themselves as we began the transition from a stand –alone program to offering a joint degree and servicing other departments. Scheduling and disrupting the course order were early problems. Once we believed we had dealt with them to some degree we were able to consider a more serious issue. What part/s of our program account/s for its success?

The original MS in Professional Leadership had the following elements:

1. Accelerated format
2. Cohort groups
3. Multi-disciplinary faculty
4. Interdisciplinary curriculum
5. Tightly linked courses

So the question became, if we changed many of these elements, how would we evaluate and compare the outcomes of the two programs and how would we know what was causing the outcomes we see?

In this paper we will first summarize some of the literature on these program elements. This literature leads us to continue to believe that these elements are crucial to supporting a positive learning environment for adult learners. Then we will summarize a research project we are undertaking to help us understand better the outcomes of these two Masters programs and the role of the above elements in supporting those outcomes.

We believe this research will help us get clearer about the curricular issues we have to make decisions about as we collaborate with other programs—something we want to do.

Literature Review

Accelerated Format

The influx of working -adult students has been the basis for colleges and universities to rearrange the time for offering classes as well as the format in which classes are taught. Adult undergraduate and graduate students who are working full-time require more convenient schedules, that is not 8:00 am to 4:00 pm choices that would interfere with their work day. While there are many retirees who wish to continue their education, the greater number of returning students want to finish their degrees before they reach retirement age. Thus, the accelerated format in higher education was introduced.

Wlodkowski and Westover (1999) conducted a two-year evaluation that compared students taking accelerated classes with students taking the same classes in traditional formats. The students were given tasks to measure outcomes and mastery of content. These were rigorous tasks that called for critical thinking. The research determined that students in accelerated formats achieved satisfactory to excellent results as did the students taking classes in the traditional format. However, the students in the accelerated format did slightly better.

Our accelerated format consists of eight-week courses that meet for three hours each week. Students take only one course each eight-week session and are expected to do considerable amounts of group and individual work outside of the class. Students who are in the MSNL program take our eight-week leadership courses and their sixteen-week nursing courses. They often take an accelerated and a traditional class at the same time. We need to know the effect of the change from eight to 16 weeks and the effect of taking two courses. How does the switch in formats affect the students? Do the eight-week courses carry less importance in the minds of the nursing students?

Cohort Groups

Cohort groups can promote cohesion and help to develop a supportive environment Basom et al (1995) posit that "effective groups work together, provide assistance to each other, find success in their efforts, while at the same time, developing their individual talents (4). This experience can help students develop interpersonal and group skill. Cohort groups can promote building consensus and trust. In doing this they learn and demonstrate that working in groups can be more effective than working alone (Pepicello & Hixson, 1999). Additionally, the interdependence, comfort and encouragement that take place in cohort groups seem to help students persist in their education even though classes and life are difficult (Millar & So, 1998).

Our students proceed through most of our program in cohort groups. The only time they are separated is when they enter their concentrations for two courses. Thus, we have a stable group that works together class after class. Most groups become very close. We have a graduation party where students give certificates of appreciation to those family and friends who have helped them. Many of those certificates are given to classmates amid tears and emotional speeches of thanks.

Our nursing leadership students have a different experience. They do not proceed in cohorts. Following a more traditional class choice option, they do not take courses in a group. Instead, they fit their classes in as they can. This means that they may enter a class knowing few of the other students. Or they may begin with one group and then proceed with another. We are interested in the outcomes for both the Professional Leadership students and for the Nursing Leadership students of the shifts in the group.

Cini (2001) suggests that the effects of newcomers to a group may range from disruption to innovation. She posits that newcomers to a group are more likely to influence a group that is 1) open, 2) not very cohesive, 3) exhibits poor performance, 4) understaffed, and, 5) at an early stage of development. However, in order to innovate within a group newcomers must 1) not appear dominant upon entering the group, and, 2) must appear knowledgeable and competent.

Does the mixture of cohort group and non-cohort group students impinge on the outcomes we expect from each of these programs? If so, what is the affect?

Multidisciplinary Faculty

The faculty of the Masters Program in Professional Leadership have degrees in political science, rhetoric, social work, psychology, health care, communication, education and sociology. The Masters of Science in Nursing faculty is the Professional Leadership faculty plus the Nursing faculty who have BSN degrees, MBAs and advanced nursing degrees.

Of all the elements of the programs we are investigating, this one would seem to be the most benign in terms of differences. The MSNL students, as well as the PRL students are exposed to a wide variety of positions, theories and practices.

Interdisciplinary Program

While the world cries out for interdisciplinary solutions (those not limited to one view, but a perspective that sees the interconnections), colleges and universities continue to promote an organizational pattern that has a vested interest in traditionally defined departments. We have clearly broken that mold both with our faculty and with the way we teach and define our classes. We have ethics, communication, research, adult learning, diversity, organizational development, transformational management as a core. The approach to each of them is interdisciplinary, yet a matrix of our classes shows that there is great overlap or linking.

Tightly Linked Courses

In spite of breaking the disciplinary mold, the courses we teach in PRL are very tightly linked. The entire program is similar to some European universities in which you may change teachers in the middle of a course, but the course continues. One might say there is redundancy in the program, but not too much. Important strands that are begun in the very first class are carried throughout the program to the very end. For example, ethics is a focus of the first class and every course after that has a component of ethics. Adult learning, communication, research, organizations, and transformational management show up in nearly every core course and are preparation for the concentrations and referred to frequently in each of them: Nonprofit Management, Training and Development, and Health Services Education.

We wonder if students who take these courses out of sequence or those who skip a session or two have the same learning outcomes as those who follow the tightly linked sequence.

The Research Project

As one approach to answering our question of which features of the PRL program and the MSNL program account for desirable program outcomes and therefore must be retained in collaborative endeavors, we decided to do a pilot study of four students. This group of four work at the same organization, all are nurses, and all entered graduate work at Carlow at the same time. Two of them completed the PRL program and two of them decided to follow the MSNL program. They took the first class, "Leadership and Ethics" together and then branched off to their respective programs. The two students who completed the Professional Leadership program have offered in class that they feel they have developed different perspectives than their two co-workers. It seemed to us that this was a place to start to try to identify what mattes in our graduate programs as we try to relate input variables to outcomes as we see them in student graduates.

Questions we decided to ask these four adult learners include some general ones asking them to identify the outcomes, changes they can see as a result of their graduate work. We wanted their words to begin the conversation. So we asked:

- What have you gained from your graduate work?
- What do you see that is different about you?
- Are there beliefs that you hold or actions that you take now that were not part of your being, acting self before?

To follow up on these questions we asked two others regarding the relevance of their learning in their graduate programs. Again, we are trying to make clearer the outcomes that they see from their graduate program.

- What did you learn in your graduate program that you have applied on your job/ In your life?
- When you talk about your graduate program, what do you say to others about it? What do you say to your co-workers, your boss?

We also wanted to ask if they could link any of their answers to the above questions to specific features or events in the graduate program they followed. So we asked:

- When or how in your graduate program did you feel this learning referred to above happen?
- When you think of the learning process you experienced in your graduate program which features of the program helped you learn the most?

We will give them prompts in order to get their responses to the elements of the programs we have listed above. We will only give prompts after they have answered these questions in their own words first.

We look forward to sharing the results of these interviews with AHEA participants and hearing the experiences they have had regarding merging programs and collaborations between programs.

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Orienting Adult Students for a Successful Transition into College: A Process Not an Event

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The purpose of orienting new students is to enable them to connect with the institution, with academic success and with other students. There is a great deal of information required for a smooth transition into college—everything from where to get a parking permit to how to become a self-directed learner. Frequently adult students have a mix of emotions as they enter or re-enter college. This emotion, together with the sheer volume of information and additional adult responsibilities, makes the transition into college difficult for many students.

Generally, the information needed for a smooth transition is addressed at an orientation event. In the best instances, these events are geared for adult learners: at a convenient time, with a condensed time format, perhaps including childcare. However, if we in academic institutions treat the orientation of new students as an isolated event, packed to the brim with all of the information and connections that students will ever need, we have missed an opportunity to maximize success potential. This paper will focus on the concept of orientation as a process, not an event. This process makes use of multiple forms of media, engages students at many points during their transition and creates smooth interfaces among all of the internal systems that students need to utilize.

Principles of Adult Learning

We can look to Jane Vella for the clear answers about why we would want to move beyond the thinking of orientation as a single event. Many of her basic principles for teaching adults are applicable to the orientation process.

Needs Assessment. Most new students know some of the questions that they need to have answered about starting school. Some questions have been answered during the admissions process. However, in many cases students don't know what they need to know in order to be successful. In order to define relevant information that a new student must have, the needs assessment should be informed by support services, faculty, current students, and alums.

Sequence and Reinforcement. This may be the most important principle in creating a multi-step orientation process. We all need to hear things many, many times in order to make that information applicable to our lives. Students are more likely to be successful if they have a series of opportunities to understand the information and issues that are relevant to their new lives as students. In implementing the tenants of sequencing we might begin with the concrete: how to get an ID, parking permit, library access, computer network, as well as what supports are available. Moving on to the more personal and more process oriented, the issues might include: what does it mean to be a self-directed learner, what to do if academic support is necessary, prioritizing other commitments and feeling okay about doing so, developing relationships with faculty and other students.

Praxis: Action and Reflection. Having done a thorough needs assessment, creators of orientation events may know clearly what information students most need. However, this tumbling of relevant information will not likely impact students until they use the systems and understand the information experientially. Even the vocabulary of academe can be confusing until put into practice. A student may be told, for example, that a Bursar's hold on her account will prohibit future registration. This means very little at the point of entry. If given multiple opportunities to understand the process, a student can work through the process of arranging for payment, understanding the timeline, perhaps arranging for employer reimbursement and understanding the implications for registration.

Safety and Respect for Learners. Adult students entering college have a multitude of experiences that they bring with them on this journey. In some cases, those experiences heighten their need for safety in an academic environment. Some who have been away from a structured learning environment for a long period of time are fearful that they have forgotten how to be a student. Others have not been strong students in the past and are committed to improving. Some students are worried about the time requirements of college in the face of other adult commitments. All of these factors, and many more, heighten the necessity of creating an environment where students can get the information they need and ask the questions relevant to their concerns. A short orientation event where students are addressed primarily in groups, probably does not allow for the safety required to enhance student learning. Part of respecting the student requires that institutions create processes where students can develop at their own pace and ask the questions for that development in a safe environment.

Immediacy. Students want the information that they need at the point at which they perceive that they need it. Some of that information can be processed by some of the students during an orientation event. However, creating immediate access by use of the web, written materials, strategically timed workshops or videos can allow any student to have immediate information as they need it.

Accountability. We must do what we say we are going to do. All departments need to be on board to assist students' transition in exactly the way we say it will happen. Giving students the view from the college handbook, if it differs from actual practice, creates difficulty and unnecessary burden for students. Helping each department clarify their processes in student-friendly language and helping departments communicate with each other helps the institution serve students with greater integrity.

Utilizing Systems Thinking

Interrelationships and Processes. Peter Senge encourages us to see interrelationships and processes, not snapshots and isolated events. (Senge, 1994) The interrelationships of an academic institution are often complex and hidden from the students' immediate view. One of the things that we can do to insure student success is to use our knowledge of institutional systems to create a process whereby those relationships fit nicely together and flow smoothly. For example, a student may not know that electronic registration for classes serves the dual purpose of putting her into the database which allows her to become an "official" student. Failure to complete the registration process can thereby cause her difficulty in paying her bill, getting into the electronic mail system, having library access… the list goes on and on. It becomes important for the key players who register new students to do so in a complete and timely fashion so that all other functions can be completed.

Faster is slower and the harder you push on a system the harder it pushes back. When blocks to that process occur, problem solving the way throughout the entire system is much more effective that blaming. Applying pressure or a "quick fix" to any one point in this process will rarely fix the system. Only working through the complexities of the systemic problem allow us to correct the situation so that the student can move seamlessly into the institution. Nothing is more exasperating to a new student that "the run-around": being sent from one department to another to solve a problem that no one quite claims.

Using the system to create leverage. One difficulty that we sometimes face is motivating students to complete tasks and gather information that we know that they will need at a later point. Although waiting for readiness is important, sometimes delaying the process too long can put them in academic jeopardy or beyond important deadlines. Using the system's structure to create trigger points can be helpful. For instance, if all students need ID's but some might be slower about gaining library access, the library process can be a pre-requisite for getting an ID.

Change and Transition

William Bridges differentiates between the concepts of *change* and *transition*. *Change* is external and about the situation: the new college, the courses, the differences in daily routine. *Transition* is the internal process people go through to psychologically integrate the change. Transition includes integrating the role of student and getting comfortable with the changes that role imposes. "Unless transition occurs, change will not work." (Bridges, 1991, p.4)

"Transition always starts with an ending." (Bridges, 1991, p. 4) The students' relationships with her family will be altered as she adjusts to the demands of school, her time commitments will be greater, her job may be effected. All of these changes need to be considered as a student moves forward. We can support students' transitions by giving them opportunities to hear from upper class students and alums who have had similar transitions. We can connect them with counselors, faculty and staff who can be good listeners and helpful problem solvers.

The reality is, however, that students will experience their own internal adjustment, their own transition, at varying speeds and varying times. This again supports the understanding of orientation as a process. If we provide ample opportunities to learn about the change, students can integrate that change at the pace of their own transition. Again, until students are comfortable with the transition, the changes that we are offering will not be helpful or successful.

Building a Systems Approach to Orientation

Repetition. If we heed Vella's guidance, we know that we must provide relevant information to students many times. The keys to delivering good information are: 1) Every department must determine, for their function, *the most important* information for new students. 2) Each department's information must be translated into a form that is clear and accurate and easily understood by a new student who may be unfamiliar with the language of the academics. 3) Every department needs to have access to every other department's information so that any person working with a student can give accurate guidance. 4) The best points of delivery for all of the relevant information must be determined by bearing in mind Vella's principle of starting with the most simple information and moving to the complex. When determining the points and processes of delivery the entire range of the students' early experiences with the institution should be considered. Information and experiences can begin with the admissions process, can be sent in the mail with acceptance materials, will continue through an orientation event, can be included in early semester workshops about where to turn and can be integrated into the classroom by well informed faculty.

Time span. The transition time line is reletively short. Students who do not adjust to college respond by leaving. The difficulty for providing personal support and supportive information is the issue of immediacy. Students are ready to hear pertinent information at varying times. Creating an interlocking, multi-step process is important. Faculty can be key agents for moving students to the appropriate support at the precise time that students demonstrate a need. The institutional picture should be complete with a planned process of educating students, faculty and staff about the needs of students and the support available.

Media. The possibilities are really limitless. The message can be carried by a variety of messagers: hard copy of policies, procedures, support information

Interactive, web based provision of relevant information and FAQ's
Connection with upper class students
Prepared video
Workshops at varying times
Integration into classroom

Coordinated systems. This might be the most obvious aspect of creating an orientation process, but it can also be the most difficult. Communicating across departmental lines in vital. It is important to create a system where all timelines mesh and support each other. All departments need to understand that policies and procedures impact many other areas and therefore need to be communicated and coordinated with the entire institution. Everyone must see the information priorities so that they are not competing for the same 15 minutes of orientation times. Conversely, each department must be given their due: an appropriate means of communicating their vital information to the students. In short, the entire institution needs to move together in the students' behalf—an idea that no one would argue with but it does require some coordinating and communicating.

Questions for consideration

Who is responsible for orientation? Does that person/department have the ability to work with the entire institution to create a congruent plan?
What information is vital immediately from a students' perspective? From the institutional perspective? From an academic perspective? From the perspective of current students and alums?
What are the various means that might be used to communicate information to students? How might technology be fully utilized?
How can faculty, staff, alumni and upper class students enhance the orientation process?
What departments on campus need to interface so that students can have a smooth transition? How does coordinating and problem solving occur among those departments?
Who translates technical, financial or complicated information into student-friendly formats?
How is the orientation process evaluated?
How does the orientation process affect student success and retention?

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The Importance of Creating a "Sense of Community" within an Adult Student Cohort

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ABSTRACT

This article presents results of a research project conducted with 39 adult students enrolled in a management degree completion program indicating that creation of a sense of community among students in a "closed" cohort setting was a significant factor in helping some adults reach their goal of getting a college degree. The data suggests that degree completion programs using a closed-cohort format which are successful in creating perceptions of a genuine sense of community among adult students may increase student retention rates.

Since 1983 there has been unprecedented growth in degree completion programs in the United States. From 1983 to 1993, the number of degree completion programs increased from 100 to 284, nearly a three-fold increase in less than 10 years (Conference for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) & American Council of Education (ACE), 1993; Balzer, 1996). One method used to structure groupings of students entering degree completion programs is to place them into cohorts.

A *cohort* has been defined by Barnett and Cafarella (1992) as consisting of a group of between 10 and 25 students who "enter a program of studies together, completing a series of common learning experiences over a one to two year period" (p.1). To contribute more knowledge about use of the cohort format on individual student performance in a degree completion program setting, I conducted a research project with 39 adult college students nearing completion of a degree completion program. The purpose of this research was to determine if creation of a genuine feeling of "community" among adult college students in a cohort setting was perceived as a significant factor in helping adult students reach their goal of obtaining a college degree. The degree completion program that served as the setting for this research was the Management and Organization Development program at Fresno Pacific University.

Related Literature

Meredith and Schewe (as cited by Boone & Kurtz, 2000) report that sociologists claim there is a tendency of members of a generation to be influenced and bound together by significant events occurring during their key formative years, roughly 17-22 years of age, which help define the core values of a particular age group. This sociological tendency has been called the "cohort effect." The American baby-boomer generation represents approximately seventy million people born between 1946 and 1964. For this generation, one shared social value of importance that has emerged is the importance of continuing educational experiences during all stages of their lives, or what is called "life-long learning" (Harris, 2000).

A growing desire for life-long learning among the American baby-boomer generation has been one reason for the large increase in the number of older adult students (aged 25 and older) returning to college to obtain a college degree. Werring (1987) reports adult students perceive the purpose for attaining a college education as a way to new knowledge and higher competence in skills already gained. Werring suggests that adults may be motivated to return to college by a genuine eagerness to learn, and experience intrinsic reward by "simply being exposed to new knowledge" (p.18).

Bean and Metzner (1985) report that a variety of curricular, economic, institutional, political, and social factors have led to the huge rise in enrollment numbers of adults over 25 years of age. One factor has been that the projections for lower numbers of 18- to 23-year-olds caused many institutions to expand offerings to older adults as a way of insuring institutional financial survival. Other key economic and social factors responsible for the growth in adult enrollment in college settings have been the decline in the blue-collar sector of the economy, changing roles of women in society, and the growth of two income family structures. The recent demographic explosion in the number of adult students returning to college who are seeking new knowledge and higher competence in skills has also created a "ripple effect" leading to impressive growth in adult programs of learning. For example, by 1993, over 600 institutions of higher learning had reported implementation of some form of adult program (CAEL /ACE, 1993).

Even though in recent years there has been a huge increase in the number of adults returning to college, their likelihood of finishing a degree program is generally lower when compared to traditional students (Bean & Metzner, 1985). In spite of lower graduation rates, Naretto's 1995 research found that adult student membership in communities internal to the institution, such as the college community defined as fellow students, was perceived by adults as an important factor in explaining the "persistence of adult students to degree completion" (p. 96).

Related to this concept of developing a community of learners, Graham and Donaldson (1999) suggest that enhanced student-to-student interactions that foster informal relationships may help integrate part-time adult learners in ways that help them connect their classroom learning with their real lives, and also foster adult learner development. Donaldson, Graham, Martindill & Bradley (2000) conducted research with returning undergraduates over the age of 26 and found that the classroom served as an important way to develop peer relationships "both before class, in class, during breaks, and after class" (p. 8). These relationships extended beyond the social realm and also led to learning related to course subject matter. The role of the teacher may be important in developing peer relationships. For example, Donaldson's 1991 research on adults' perceptions of instructional excellence indicates that one key characteristic of exemplary instruction is that the instructor fosters development of a community of learners.

Tinto, one of the major researchers on college student retention in the United States, believes that a common feature of effective retention programs are those programs that make contact with students in order to establish personal bonds among and between students, faculty and staff (1987). Tinto advocates creation of a classroom experience where all students are equal members, and where "students develop supportive, rather that competitive peer relationships" as a way to increase student retention in college environments (Spann, 1990, p. 22). Graham & Donaldson (1999) feel that because adults are not on campus often, they "may be forced to find ways to use the classroom as the focal point for their learning experiences" (p. 30). These researchers believe that the classroom connects the instructor and student peers and "provides a context to socially construct, for themselves and others, what it means to be a college student" (p. 31).

Tinto encourages creating a *sense of community* on college campuses as a way to help students' feelings of belongingness and also as a way to encourage personal growth and academic development (Spann, 1990). In 1980, Pascarella and Terenzini operationalized many of the theories advocated by Tinto's model and found that students' positive peer-group interactions contributed to student persistence in college programs.

Tucker (1999) takes issue with Tinto by arguing that a sense of community alone may be one key factor containing more "useful theoretical considerations to help… address the issue of student retention at colleges" (p.163). Tucker defines "sense of community" to include peer group relationships. Tucker feels sense of community is an important factor that help students transition successfully by helping students believe they belong in the new environment of college. Related to the importance of peer group relationships, Hagedorn's 1999 research with female graduate students over 30 also indicates that maintaining positive student-student interactions is one important variable to student persistence towards graduation.

Mashburn (2001) tested a model of a psychological process of college student dropout and found that student satisfaction impacted cognition about dropout, which also influenced dropout behavior. Key aspects used by Mashburn to define the academic environment related to student satisfaction included cooperativeness and friendliness of classmates, the number of close friends that you have at school, peer study groups, and concern instructors have for helping the adult student learn.

Frost's (1999) research on a private faith-based law school indicates that a key factor for the law school's success in retention and graduation of law students is use of a model based on the building of community. This model presented by Frost encourages student interaction with both faculty and other students which fosters students' spiritual growth. An investigation by Noel, Levitz & Saluri in 1991 indicates that social and academic integration within college communities is a critical factor in student retention.

The Werring study in 1987 reports that adults prefer less formality in student/teacher roles. The Mangano and Corrado study in 1980 (as cited by Kasworm, 1990) indicated that adults prefer classes held during the evening. Both type of preferences in teaching methodology by adult students have translated into many degree completion programs that are offered to adults during evening hours. Some degree completion programs are also using a model of experiential learning where the teacher acts more as a facilitator with students, and performs less of a traditional role as a "dispenser" of information to adults. To help in this learning process of older adults, some degree completion programs use the cohort model as a way to organize the learning experiences of adult students.

Many degree completion programs nationally are currently using one of two different versions of the cohort setting as a way of structuring curriculum offerings to adult students. These two forms of cohort settings are defined as either *open* or *closed*. With the open-cohort format, the program offers "rolling admissions and allows more student choice in sequencing classes and time to complete the degree" (Maher, 2001, p.3). With the closed-cohort format, "students enter the program together and remain together for all of their coursework in a lock-step sequence" (p.3).

Research by Barnett and Caffarella in 1992 indicates the closed-cohort format is more closely associated with the occurrence of group cohesiveness, which results in a supportive group of individuals. Group cohesiveness is defined by Ridgeway (1983) as a type of shared unity and solidarity that leads a group to bind together. Group cohesion among cohort settings has been identified as a factor by Wesson, Holman, Holman, and

Cox (1996) leading to higher levels of mental processing and also created new ways of constructing knowledge. Reynolds and Hebert (1995) report greater group interaction and group cohesiveness occurred in cohort groups than in non-cohort groups, and also faculty perceptions that strong social support among students in cohort and intensive class settings was a factor encouraging students to remain in a program, complete a degree, and produce favorable effects on learning. Norris and Barnett's (1994) research with 50 students enrolled in cohort programs at four university sites indicates participation in a cohort setting led to increased personal growth and knowledge. Respondents in this same study also report perceptions that the cohort experience provided them with mutual support, solidarity, and increased feelings of interdependence (1994).

Besides group cohesiveness, in many cohort settings students report that close family-like bonds and team-like spirit often develop between themselves and other students, and students feel at least some responsibility to care for and support other cohort members emotionally (Maher, 2001; Ashar & Lane, 1993). Barnett and Cafarella (1992) also claim that adult learners have affiliation needs, defined as the "desire for learners to be connected and supportive of each other's learning" (p.17). These strong affiliation needs often result in students' desire for continued contact with others in their cohort setting, even after their program of learning has ended.

Cohesiveness and family-like bonds that result from cohort settings may also reflect the characteristic of human interaction that as individuals, we seek a sense of belonging, and we want to be an accepted member of some group or groups (Garn & Ort, 1991) Cohorts that tend to bond together become over time like "in-class cliques." Research indicates students who are members of in-class cliques tend to remain in an educational program versus students who become socially isolated from others (Vann & Hinton, 1994).

One of Maher's (2001) key findings with research conducted with thirteen graduate students was that the cohort setting for these students bore strong resemblance to a community. Maher felt this cohort setting was similar to a community because members developed meaningful relationships and roles and learned to "live and learn together" through both easy and difficult times (p. 8).

However, research by Reynolds and Hebert in 1998(a) indicates student learning gains in cohort vs. non-cohort settings that were "less dramatic" than research in 1995 these same investigators had earlier reported indicating greater interaction and cohesiveness in cohort groups (p. 37). Reynolds and Hebert (1998b) also report findings that overall differences between cohort programs and non-cohort programs are small, even though greater affective learning gains favor cohort programs. Yerkes, Basom, Norris, and Barnett (1995) report faculty reactions that are "somewhat mixed" of their work with cohorts even though more faculty "tend to be reporting positive results of their work with cohorts" (p. 12). These differing research findings reported by Reynolds and Hebert (1998a, 1998b) and Yerkes and others (1995) suggest that more empirical evidence is needed to determine what types of learning gains are actually obtained by students involved in cohort settings.

Background on the Management and Organization Development Program at Fresno Pacific University

Fresno Pacific University (FPU) is a Christian liberal arts university with a dominant culture, mission, and ethos that strongly encourages and supports the creation of a genuine and caring Christian community of learners in how faculty, staff, and students work together collaboratively and process important decision-making (FPU Teaching Faculty Handbook, 1999; Toews, 1995). The resultant dominant culture of a caring, interactive community created and still active at FPU has also influenced the creation of curriculum offered for non-traditional older adult students attending FPU in the MOD program.

The Management and Organization Development (MOD) program at FPU is a fifty-seven week degree completion management program specifically designed for working adult professionals with a minimum of seven years of previous work experience. Students entering this program average approximately thirty-eight years of age. For four hours, during one evening each week, MOD adult students meet in a closed-cohort group setting that ranges in size from eight to twenty students and receive management education related to how organizations operate (Harris, 2000). The MOD program has been in operation at FPU since 1991. During the last ten years, the MOD program has produced over 1000 college graduates (D. Langhofer, personal communication, May 13, 2002).

The MOD program is a management program that was originally created in 1989 by Spring Arbor College, located in Spring Arbor, Michigan. Spring Arbor College then marketed the MOD program nationally, where it was offered in a franchised format to other U.S. colleges. The MOD program is currently being offered at eighteen U.S. Christian colleges (D. Garn, personal communication, May 15, 1998).

The model used for the FPU MOD program is designed around many practices identified by Basom and Yerkes (2001) which supposedly contribute in creating a cohesive learning community among the cohort groups. Specific curriculum practices used to develop this learning community include self-discovery. MOD students complete a variety of self-assessment instruments such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, KOLB Learning Styles Inventory, Portfolios, and LEAD Self-Leadership Style (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988) designed to help the student first learn about themselves.

The MOD program also carries out specific practices Basom and Yerkes (2001) claim develops a learning community that fosters individual and group interaction. Examples of these practices are that MOD cohorts range in size from 10-25 students, students share a sense of shared purpose in seeking to complete the program to obtain a college degree, students share social gatherings together such as the weekly dinner break, and students work in both small and large group settings cooperatively and collaboratively in completing most in-class learning activities. I have worked as a full-time professor in the FPU MOD program since 1995.

The MOD program includes six curriculum-related elements which, for the purposes of this study, I identified as possibly contributing to the creation of a feeling of community within the MOD cohort setting. Dr. Dennis Langhofer, who was the first director of the MOD program at FPU during the years 1992 to 1998, introduced four of these six elements into this degree completion program in 1992, when the MOD program was first offered at FPU. These four elements were: (a) weekly devotions, (b) dinner break, (c) the teaching style of the FPU MOD facilitators, and (d) student secret supporter system. Dr. Langhofer introduced these four curriculum-related elements into the program to deliberately encourage the creation of a caring community within the adult cohort groups (Langhofer, personal communication, May 13, 2002). In speaking of this deliberation in seeking to create community within cohort groups in the MOD program, Dr. Langhofer said, "Community does not just happen. It [within the cohort setting] has to be nurtured into a wholesome kind of community" (D. Langhofer, personal communication, May 13, 2002).

Besides the four elements introduced by Dr. Langhofer, I identified two other curriculum elements that from a review of the literature, I hypothesized may also possibly contribute to the creation of "community" in the FPU MOD program. These two additional elements were: (a) E-mail communication among students, and (b) Having the unifying goal of getting a college degree. The six curriculum-related elements are explained in more detail below:

The Six Curriculum-Related Elements Identified as Possibly Contributing to the Creation of "Community" in the FPU MOD Program

Weekly Devotions:

During the first ten minutes for most of the 57 weeks of the MOD program, a student from the cohort group leads the group in what is termed a "devotion." Students are encouraged by the MOD professor to use the devotion time as a way to edify and encourage the cohort group, and help direct the cohort group into positively engaging with the classroom learning for the evening of class. The devotion is rotated equally as a required classroom responsibility among all cohort students.

During my six years of working with 15 FPU MOD cohort groups, I have observed MOD students conduct devotion in a variety of ways. Some MOD students will use this ten-minute time period to read and interpret Bible verses, read from a book of poetry, share a short personal story, play an instrument, sing a song, introduce short experiential exercises designed to help the students learn more about each other, tell a work-related story, etc… Because of the unique personal nature of this classroom exercise, devotion creates the opportunity and "space" for both peers and the MOD professor leading the cohort group to learn more intimately about the personal life of the student leading devotion.

According to student entrance surveys, approximately 75% of FPU MOD students claim some type of current religious affiliation (D. Langhofer, personal communication, May 13, 2002). All MOD students are given personal freedom to lead a devotion anyway they wish, according to their own religious or non-religious personal beliefs. The only stipulation for leading devotion is that it be conducted in a manner that encourages the cohort group to begin the evening class in a positive way.

Dinner Break

During most weeks of the FPU MOD program, the cohort takes a 20-30 minute dinner break. Each week, two or three students in the cohort group share an equally rotated responsibility for bringing a complete dinner for the entire cohort. MOD students take a 20-30 minute break sometime during the evening class where this dinner is shared among all members of the cohort (including the MOD professor).

The dinner break occurs sometime during the first two hours after class begins. The dinner break allows the students and the facilitator to "break bread" together and eat together as a type of family or community unit. The dinner break encourages both the cohort students and the MOD professor time to "disengage" from traditional teacher/student classroom roles and creates an environment to talk more candidly with each other about other personal issues.

Student Secret Supporter System:

To encourage greater group bonding and support among the cohort, during the first 3-4 weeks of the program the MOD facilitator will randomly assign each student in a new cohort group the volunteer responsibility to secretly encourage and support another student within their same cohort. This student "secret supporter" responsibility extends during the length of the entire MOD program. MOD students are encouraged to support (usually on a monthly basis, if possible) a fellow student in their cohort by occasionally bringing a small gift for their assigned student to class. This gift is left "secretly"with either the MOD professor or placed on a table in the back of the room where the food for the evening dinner is placed.

The student leading the weekly devotion passes out secret supporter gifts. The distribution and opening of secret supporter gifts takes place in front of the entire cohort just after the weekly devotion ends. Secret supporter gifts brought may simply be a card with words of encouragement written on it, a small box of candy, a pair of movie tickets, a pen, a coffee mug, etc. The monetary value of a secret supporter gift is usually low and does not exceed five dollars in cost.

A secret supporter gift is usually accompanied with a personal card addressed to the student. The card often includes a written message encouraging the student to persist towards their goal of obtaining a college degree. MOD students will often share the personal message written on the card with the entire cohort. Participation in the student secret supporter gift-giving system is on a volunteer basis.

Facilitation Teaching Style of the Major Professor in the MOD Program

As stated in its mission statement, FPU incorporates the goal of providing adult students with Christian-based liberal arts education (FPU Teaching Faculty Handbook, 1999). MOD professors assigned to work with students in a facilitative teaching role during the 57 week program are expected to behaviorally model Christian, faith-based values such as giving genuine care for each of their cohort students and demonstrating high standards of ethical behavior towards other students, faculty, and staff. By demonstration of genuine caring behavior towards students, the MOD professor provides critical leadership for all activities of the cohort group, and also acts as an important model to cohort students for many of the leadership principles that are taught in the MOD program (Langhofer, 4; as cited by Harris, 2000).

The primary MOD professor works with each cohort group during the first twenty-five weeks of the MOD program while leading the group towards completion of modules 1,2, 3, and 4 of the program. During weeks 26 to 45 of the program, other adjunct professors step in to lead the cohort group during completion of modules 5, 6, and 7 of the program. The primary MOD professor then returns to lead the cohort group during the last thirteen weeks of the MOD program towards completion of the final two modules of the program. The primary MOD professor leads the cohort group for a total of 39 weeks out of the entire 57-week program.

During these 39 weeks, the primary MOD professor assists each cohort group to bond and work together as a unified group. As a result, the classroom leadership style of the primary MOD professor has a strong impact in determining the amount of cohesiveness that forms in the cohort group. This cohesiveness and group bonding is particularly important for the cohort during the first twenty-six weeks of the MOD program, when norms for the cohort group tend to become firmly established . Dr. D. Langhofer, the previous Director of the MOD program at FPU during the years 1992 to 1998 says, "The MOD professor acts to create expectations (within the cohort) of what a community is, and how dialogue occurs among groups" (D. Langhofer, personal communication, May 13, 2002).

E-Mail Communication After-Hours with other Students

During the first three weeks of the MOD program, all new MOD cohorts elect a student within their cohort to act as the official class representative. The class representative serves as an important liaison between the cohort students and the FPU MOD administration. The class representative will create a written list of e-mail addresses of fellow students. This e-mail list is then copied and distributed to every member of the cohort group. MOD students use e-mail as a way to quickly communicate with those members of their cohort. Usually, e-mail communication among FPU cohorts concerns administrative functioning of the MOD program, or other MOD curriculum issues.

Having a Unifying Goal of Getting a College Degree

The literature suggests that a shared purpose is a key element of successful groups and supports group interdependence and individual achievement (Basom & Yerkes, 2001). Another element I identified as possibly contributing to the creation of community in the cohort setting is that all MOD adult students share the same goal of obtaining a college degree. The MOD program becomes their "vehicle" for helping them "drive" towards this goal. This unifying goal of receiving a college goal is demonstrated significantly with each FPU MOD group during week seven of the MOD program. During week seven, the students complete a classroom exercise when they create one-year group goals for their cohort. All fifteen MOD cohort groups I have led since 1995 listed as their primary group goal that of every student in their cohort setting receiving their college degree.

Purpose

To gain more insight about student perceptions regarding the possible importance of creating a genuine feeling of community among adult students using a closed-cohort model in a degree completion program, I conducted research with a group of 39 adult students from four different cohort groups nearing completion of the MOD program at Fresno Pacific University. I wanted to learn if six curriculum-related elements I identified as possibly contributing to the creation of community among students were a significant factor in helping these adult students reach their goal of obtaining a college degree. Besides these six elements, I also wanted to learn if there were other elements that possibly contributed to the creation of community in their cohort group, and reasons why they believed the creation of community in their cohort group were possibly significant in helping them obtain their goal of getting a college degree.

The following five research questions were used:

1. During your experience in the MOD program, was a genuine feeling of community created within your class?

2. In what order of importance would you rank the six items listed below in contributing most to the creation of community in your MOD group: (1)Weekly devotions; (2) Dinner break; (3)Secret supporter system; (4) The teaching style of the FPU MOD facilitators; (5) E-mail communication with other students after-hours; and (6) Having the unifying goal of getting a college degree?

3. Is there any other item besides the six items listed in question two that you believe contributed to the creation of community in your MOD group?

4. Was the overall creation of community in your MOD group a significant factor in helping you obtain your goal of getting a college degree?

5. If you answered "yes" to question four above, why was the creation of community a significant factor in helping you obtain your goal of getting a college degree?

Methods

To carry out the methodology of this descriptive research, I developed a short one-page survey instrument specifically constructed in a combined yes/no, ranking, and open-ended format to ask the five research questions. If students answered "no" to the first question of the survey, "During your experience in the MOD program was a genuine feeling of community created within your class?" they were given instructions not to complete the four additional questions asked on the survey. If respondents' marked "yes" to question one of the survey instrument, they were also asked to complete the remaining questions of the survey. Besides ranking six items in terms of importance related to creating community in their MOD cohort, I also asked respondents' to identify any other item they believed to be contributing to the creation of community in their MOD cohort group.

As part of the survey instrument, MOD students were first given a dictionary definition of the word "community." This definition was given to help establish commonality of understanding of the term "community" among all survey participants. For the purposes of this study, the word "community" was defined by Webster's as "a group of people living together and having interests, work, participation, ownership etc. in common: as, a college community… ownership or participation in common: as, community of social life" (Cayne, 1964*)*.

Population and Sample

This study focused on a population of over 1000 FPU students nearing graduation from the MOD program (weeks 54 or 55 of the 57 week long program) during the ten years extending from 1992 to 2001. In selecting a sample, I identified four different cohort groups containing a total of 39 students who were all nearing completion of the

FPU MOD program. This sample makeup approximately 4.3 percent of the total group of over 1000 MOD students who have graduated from the MOD program during the years 1991 to 2001.

To select the sample, I surveyed all MOD classes that were entering week 54 or later of the 57-week program during a time period extending from February 21st to July 19th 2001. The date's chosen for selection of these particular MOD classes chosen were random.

Descriptive data were calculated for the 5 questions of the questionnaire including using number of respondents, standard deviation, standard error, confidence level, and rankings. Also, percentage and frequency responses were compiled for all 5 questions on the survey. I used both chi-square and yates correction continuity statistical testing to determine possible significance of results obtained. Open-ended written responses were summarized using a "cluster and summarize" method recommended by Cox (1996) for two of the survey questions.

Validity and Reliability of the Survey Instrument

One factor supporting content validity is that I cross-referenced the content of the survey instrument to those elements reported in the literature (Cox 1996). This process was supported by my previous 1900 hours of teaching experience as a FPU MOD professor with 15 different MOD cohort groups. Limitations of the survey instrument were that content validity may have been significantly improved by having other MOD professors who were specialists with the MOD program review the instrument to insure that the questionnaire was formulated to "list appropriate items to get at what is desired" (Cox 1996, p. 35). Another limitation of the survey instrument was that reliability was not established with a pre-and-post test to insure the instrument would elicit consistent responses over time. Due to time constraints, field testing of the instrument with a small sample of respondents' was not first conducted before administering the survey instrument. A final limitation of the research was that the sample surveyed was limited to only 39 respondents who were all graduating from the FPU MOD program in 2001.

Findings

Findings for Research Question One

Question one asked respondents to first read a definition of the word "community" given in Webster's College Edition of The New World Dictionary. Respondents were then asked to respond with either a "yes" or "no" to the following question: During your experience in the MOD program, was a genuine feeling of community created within your class? In summarizing written responses given by respondents, all thirty-nine respondents (100.0 percent) marked "yes" to question one.

Presented in Table 1 is statistical chi-square data on responses to question one of the survey summarizing the perception that MOD students believe there was a genuine feeling of community created within their cohort setting. The obtained thirty-nine responses of "yes" exceeded the expected 19.5 responses. The results of the computed chi-square value of 39.00 exceeded the table chi-square value of 6.64, indicating significance at the .99 percent degree of confidence.

Because the degrees of freedom were equal to one and one of the responses cells was less than ten in number, to further support these statistical results a correctional variation of the chi-square goodness-of-fit test called the yates correction continuity test

(Harvey 1991) was also conducted with the data. Results of the yates correction continuity test also confirmed results originally obtained with chi-square testing with a .99 degree of confidence.

Table 1

Summary of Chi-Square Goodness of Fit and Yates Correction Continuity Testing for Question One of Survey

Response Category	Obtained	Expected	d.f.	Chi-Square Value	Table Chi-Square	Yates Correction Value	Significance At .99 Level
Yes	39	19.5	1	19.5	-	4.875	-
No	0	19.5	1	19.5	-	4.875	-
Total	39	39	1	39	6.64	9.75	Yes

Note. N = 39 responses

Findings for Research Question Two

Question two asked respondents to rank in order of importance with a score of "1" being most important and "6" being least important six items which I identified as possibly being significant in contributing to the creation of community within the students' MOD cohort setting. These six items listed were: (1) Weekly Devotions; (2) Dinner Break; (3) E-mail communication after-hours with other students; (4) Secret supporter system; (5) Having a unifying goal with other classmates of getting a college degree; and (6) Facilitation teaching style by the major professor.

In summarizing quantitative written responses, I first tallied numerical responses ranging from a "1" to a "6" given by respondents for each of the six items. The numerical total response for each ranking from "1" to "6" was then multiplied by the ranking itself to arrive at a numerical score for each of the six ranking choices. A total for the six rankings was then tallied to arrive at a final score for each of the six items. A lower combined numerical score for a particular item would thus indicate more ranked importance to the respondent versus a higher numerical score for the same item. Using this method, in Table 2 are given the numerical responses and overall ranking in importance of these six items given by respondents to Question Two of the survey.

Using the numerical responses and resultant rankings obtained, chi-square statistical testing was conducted on the rankings that MOD students gave to the respective six items listed in Question Two of the survey . The obtained numerical responses for each of the six items were compared to the expected value of 136.33 that would be obtained if there were no difference between each of the items ranked by respondents of the survey. With five degrees of freedom, the results of the computed chi-square value of 84.68 far exceeded the table chi-square value of 15.09, indicating significance at the .99 percent degree of confidence.

Table 2

Overall Numerical Score and Importance of Ranking of the Six Items for Question Two of Survey

Item	Overall Numerical Score	Overall Ranking of Item in terms of Importance to Respondents
Weekly Devotions	94	1
Having a unifying goal with my other classmates of getting a college degree	104	2
Facilitation Style by your Major Professor	107	3
Dinner Break	118	4
Secret Supporter System	192	5
E-mail communication after-hours with other students	203	6

Note. N = 39 responses

Table 3 presents rankings of the six items in question two of the survey by mean response, standard deviation, standard error, upper bound and lower bound confidence levels, and ranking. The data indicate overall rankings of the six-item match identically with the rankings found in Table 2. In comparing the upper and lower bound confidence levels of the top three of items, *Weekly Devotions*, *Having a unifying goal with my other classmates of getting a college degree*, and *Facilitation Style by your Major Professor*, could not be distinguished statistically as ranking different from each other. However, in comparing the upper and lower bound confidence levels, the item ranked number 1, *Weekly Devotions* could be distinguished, with a 95 percent degree of confidence, as ranking higher in terms of importance as compared to the item ranked 4, *Dinner Break*, item ranked 5, *Secret Supporter System*, and item ranked 6, *E-mail communication after-hours with other students*.

Table 3
Mean Response,, Standard Deviation, Standard Error, Confidence Level and Ranking in Importance for Question Two of Survey

Item	Mean Response	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	95% Confidence Level Low Bound-Upper Bound	Ranking
Weekly Devotions	2.41	1.31	.42	1.57 – 3.25	1
Having a unifying goal with my other classmates of getting a college degree	2.66	1.52	.24	2.18 – 3.14	2
Facilitation Style by your Major Professor	2.74	1.41	.23	2.28 – 3.20	3
Dinner Break	3.02	1.51	.24	2.54 – 3.50	4
Secret Supporter System	4.92	1.10	.18	4.56 – 5.28	5
E-mail communication after-hours with other students	5.20	.80	.128	4.94 – 5.46	6

Note. N = 39 respondents

Findings for Research Question Three

Question three of the survey asked survey participants the following: "Is there any other item you would like to add that you believe contributed to the creation of community in your MOD group?" There were 20 written responses given by 17 MOD students to question three of the survey. Frequency and percentages percentages in Table 4 summarize these responses.

In summarizing the open-ended responses given in Table 4, two respondents (10.0 percent) perceived that starting a study group contributed to the creation of community in their MOD group. Three respondents (15.0 percent) perceived that sharing their life experiences with each other contributed to the creation of community. Three respondents (15.0 percent) perceived different elements of the MOD program such as small group exercises or projects contributed to the creation of community.

Three respondents (15.0 percent) perceived that different elements of the MOD curriculum such as Module 1, Module 6, or a particular week in Module 9 (Week 52) where students share personal artifacts with each other signifying an important value in their life contributed to the creation of community.

Two respondents (10.0 percent) perceived that having the same difficult goal of completing the MOD program to obtain a college degree helped bring the group together and contributed to the creation of community. Four respondents (20.0 percent) perceived that the emphasis on the groups "togetherness" helped the group become a "complete fit" which contributed to the creation of community. Included in these perceptions were that some students felt they could go to the group to get help, and that there was a community commitment by their group to the individual goals of each member.

In summarizing key written responses to question three of the survey, 7 students (35 percent of respondents) listed a variety of items related to the interpersonal nature of support received from their fellow MOD students contributing to the creation of community in their MOD cohort. Some of these items include having the same difficult goal, which helped students unite as a group, seeking help from the group, and having a community commitment to the individual goals of each member. Seven students (35 percent of respondents) listed a variety of MOD curriculum elements such as small group interactions, exercises, group projects, the Bible module, or the MOD instructor being open and genuine as contributing to the creation of "community" in the MOD program.

Findings for Research Question Four

Question four asked survey participants to respond with either a "yes" or "no" to the following question: "Was the overall creation of community in your MOD group a significant factor in helping you obtain your goal of getting a college degree?" In summarizing written responses, thirty-five respondents (87.17 percent) marked "yes," four respondents (10.25 percent) marked "no," and one respondent (02.56 percent) marked "not sure" to question five of the survey. Presented in Table 5 is chi-square and yates correction continuity statistical testing summarizing the perception that MOD students believe that the overall creation of community in their MOD cohort was a significant factor in helping them obtain their goal of getting a college degree. The results of the computed chi-square testing indicate a .99 degree of confidence. Because the degrees of freedom were equal to one and one of the responses cells was less than ten in number, to further test these statistical results, yates correction continuity testing (Harvey 1991) was also conducted with the data. After further data correction of the original chi-square results using the yates correction continuity statistical testing, data results were still confirmed with a 95 percent degree of confidence.

Table 4

Frequency and Percentage of Open-Ended Responses for Question Three of Survey

Open-ended response category	Frequency	Percentage
Shared life experiences	3	15.0
Small group interactions, Exercises, or group projects	3	15.0
Starting a study group	2	10.0
We all had the same difficult goal, which brought us together	2	10.0
We were a complete fit as a group/ emphasis of the groups togetherness	2	10.0
Common response to Bible class and its instructors	1	5.0
Artifact day	1	5.0
Module 1, which forced sharing and making yourself vulnerable	1	5.0
MOD instructor was open to class suggestions, flexible, and genuine	1	5.0
The need to seek help from the group	1	5.0
A community commitment To the individual goals of each member	1	5.0
People in the class are all individuals and strong minded	1	5.0
Acceptance/ honesty	1	5.0
Total	20	100.0

Note. N = 20 written responses

Table 5

Summary of Chi-Square Goodness of Fit and Yates Correction Continuity Testing for Question Four of Survey

Response Category	Obtained	Expected	Degrees of Freedom.	Chi-Square Value	Chi-Square Significance at .99 level	Yates Correct. Value	Yates Significance At .95 Level
Yes	34	19	1	11.84	-	2.96	-
No	4	19	1	11.84	-	2.96	-
Total	38	38	1	23.68	Yes	5.92	Yes

Note. N=38, 1 Respondent marked "not sure"

Findings for Research Question Five

Question five of the survey, which used an open-ended format, asked the 34 survey participants who marked "yes" to question four of the survey to explain *why* [italics added] the overall creation of community in their MOD cohort was a significant factor in helping them obtain their goal of getting a college degree. Frequency and percentages in Table 6 summarize these responses. In summarizing the open-ended written responses to question five of the survey, a combined total of 17 respondents (40.4 percent) perceived that support from their classmates was a significant factor in helping them obtain their goal of getting a college degree. Examples of verbatim written responses in this category were, "great support system of new found friends," "the support when I felt like quitting.." "We had lots of support from each other. And, without that, I believe some of us might not have made it," " They pushed me along when I did not feel like it," and "there was a great deal of support from… classmates."

Nine respondents (21.4 percent) perceived that encouragement from classmates was why the overall creation of community in their MOD cohort was a significant factor in helping them obtain their goal of getting a college degree. Examples of verbatim written responses in this category were, "they encouraged and helped me with papers, homework," "without the encouragement… of my classmates, I may not have been able to complete the program," and "…when things really mattered everyone encouraged each other."

Four respondents (9.6 percent) perceived that the friendship, closeness, affection or love of their classmates was why the creation of community in their MOD cohort was a significant factor in helping them obtain their goal of getting a college degree. An example of a verbatim response given in this category was, "I feel confident that I would have quit the program if it had not been for the closeness and sense of independence created within our cohort."

Three respondents (7.7 percent) perceived that motivation they received from their classmates was why the overall creation of community in their MOD cohort was a significant factor in helping them obtain their goal of getting a college degree. An example of a verbatim written response given in this category was, "classmates served to motivate and encourage completion of assignments/program."

Table 6

Frequency and Percentage of Open-Ended Responses for Question Five of Survey

Open-ended response category	Frequency	Percentage
My classmates encouraged me	9	21.4
My classmates supported me	17	40.4
The friendship, closeness, affection or love of my classmates	4	9.6
The cohesiveness of the group	1	2.3
The camaraderie created within our group	2	4.7
The experiences and wisdom of my classmates	1	2.3
MOD instructor was available to me	1	2.3
My instructor supported me	1	2.3
It helped me stay focused	1	2.3
My classmates motivated me	3	7.7
Together we shared our concerns as we progressed	1	2.3
Boosted self esteem	1	2.3
Working as a group is a great idea	1	2.3
Total	42	100.0

Note. N=34 ; 1 blank response

Two respondents (4.7 percent) perceived that the camaraderie created within their group was why the overall creation of community in their MOD group was a significant factor in helping them obtain their goal of getting a college degree. Two respondents (4.7 percent) perceived that support from their MOD instructor was why the overall creation of community in their MOD group was a significant factor in helping them obtain their goal of getting a college degree. Finally, five respondents (11.9 percent) provided miscellaneous comments. Examples of these type of verbatim responses included, "Working as a group is a great idea," and "boosted self esteem. Made me happy to be there."

In summarizing key written responses to open-ended question five of the survey, 90.4 percent of written responses related to support, encouragement, friendship, closeness, affection, cohesiveness, camaraderie, motivation, love and wisdom students perceived they *received from their fellow classmates* [italics added] as a significant factor that helped them obtain their goal of obtaining a college degree. Only two respondents (04.7 percent) perceived the MOD professors they interacted with while they were students in the program were a significant factor in helping them obtain their goal of getting a college degree.

Discussion and Recommendations

Based on results of this study's findings, the adult student respondents' perceive that during their experience in the MOD program, a genuine feeling of community was created within their cohort setting. Furthermore, the respondents' perceive that the overall creation of community in their cohort setting was a significant factor in helping them obtain their goal of getting a college degree. These results support previous literature by Naretto (1995) suggesting that membership in communities comprised of fellow students was perceived by adults as an important factor in explaining persistence of adult students to degree completion.

This study's findings also suggest support for previous literature reporting that positive peer-group interactions among students which encourage group cohesiveness leading to a sense of community can be instrumental in leading to improved student retention in programs of adult learning (Noel, Levitz & Saluri 1991; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980, Vann & Hinton, 1994). The findings of this present study also resonate well with Ridgeway's 1983 work (as cited by Maher 2001) discussed earlier which found that group cohesiveness that leads a group to bind together positively influences student retention in the closed-cohort format. The data of this study also suggest support for Tinto's (1987) claim that effective retention programs help students establish personal bonds with other students and that students who experience a sense of community during their learning may encourage their personal growth and academic development.

The majority of adults (aged 25 and older) enter degree completion programs to complete a degree program begun in earlier years (Kasworm & Pike, 1994). Because of this long hiatus away from college, many older adults may enter degree completion programs somewhat insecure about their ability to achieve a college degree. Related to this initial insecurity by older adults reentering college, as discussed earlier, Tucker (1999) perceives that "sense of community" may be the key factor to address student retention in college. Tucker feels that sense of community helps students' transition to a new environment of college. The findings of this research suggest support for Tucker's claims.

This study found that of the six identified curriculum elements possibly contributing to community, *Weekly Devotions* ranked number one as being most contributory to a genuine feeling of community being created within the MOD cohort setting. It may be that the intimate and open nature of the sharing given by students during the *Weekly Devotions* influenced even those of a non-religious orientation to still bond with their religiously oriented fellow classmates in a positive way, and vice-versa. This particular finding may suggest that sharing the leading of a devotion among all FPU MOD students, irrespective of their religious or non-religious orientation, creates a "space" that encourages more tolerance and respect for other students.

The item ranked number two of the six items contributing to a genuine feeling of community in the MOD cohort was the students' *Unifying Goal of Getting a College Degree*. This finding supports previous literature suggesting that a shared purpose among students supports group interdependence and individual achievement (Basom &

Yerkes, 2001). Degree completion directors who are using a closed-cohort format should consider that experiential methods used with students in the beginning of program offerings which help adult students identify commonality of important goals (such as obtaining a college degree) may be very useful in assisting new groups of students to bond together more quickly and become a more unified, cohesive group. This type of bonding or group cohesiveness may be important in helping new adult students overcome initial feelings of insecurity about their ability to achieve a college degree.

This study indicates that the most significant factor contributing to the feeling of community created within the MOD cohort setting, and in turn, being a critical factor in helping some students obtain their goal of receiving their college degree, related most to the intimate and caring nature of relationships students formed *with each other* [italics added]. Based on statistical analysis of responses received to question five of the survey, over ninety percent of FPU MOD students believe that the support, encouragement, friendship, closeness, affection, cohesiveness, camaraderie, motivation, love, and wisdom they received from *their fellow classmates* [italics added] were very significant factors assisting students obtain their goal of getting a college degree.

In summarizing the open-ended responses to both questions three and five of the survey, I learned very surprising information emerged about the critical importance of support and encouragement needed by some FPU MOD students from their fellow classmates to help them obtain their goal of getting a college degree. According to verbatim comments given by some respondents, this type of support and encouragement received from their fellow classmates was often stated as the *key reason* [italics added] some MOD students were able to complete the program and reach their goal of getting a college degree. Thus, the creation of a caring community among students in their cohort setting was considered essential for some FPU MOD students in obtaining their college degree. This particular finding indicates that positive peer relationships are very important to some adult students in a closed-cohort setting, and suggest support for Graham and Donaldson's (1999) investigation indicating that enhanced student-to-student interactions foster adult learner development. This finding also suggests strong support for Barnett and Cafarella's (1992) claim that adult learners have affiliation needs, previously defined as the "desire for learners to be connected and supportive of each other's learning" (p.17).

The data support the notion that creation of a caring community among students in a closed-cohort setting may help degree completion program administrators retain some students, who, without this type of encouragement and caring support from their peers, might otherwise fail. The research presented in this study, although based on a small sample of 39 adult students enrolled in one degree completion program, adds possible support for the theoretical concept that creating a genuine feeling or sense of a caring community among adult students in a closed-cohort setting may be contributory in leading to increased student retention in degree completion programs. Degree completion programs using a closed-cohort format may improve their numbers of students retained by including more elements deliberately introduced within curriculum designed to help adult students develop genuine bonds of trust and support with each other.

It is recommended that subsequent research be conducted with larger samples of adult students in other degree completion closed-cohort settings to further test the idea that creating a caring community among adults in a closed-cohort setting where students actively encourage and support each other leads to increased rates of student retention.

This research should be constructed in a format to quantify numerically what percentage of students in closed-cohort settings are increased to graduation as a result of creating a caring community in these type of settings.

Additional research, which is defined more quantifiably, may suggest support for the theoretical concept that a "cohort retention effect" takes place in terms of additional adult students brought to college graduation due to the direct benefits of experiencing a genuine sense of community within their closed-cohort setting. It is also recommended that research be conducted to compare graduation rates between open-cohort and closed-cohort settings to determine if there are any significant differences in graduation rates between these two different types of cohort settings. Finally, it is recommended more empirical research is needed to clearly identify what key elements define the term "sense of community" and what importance those elements may be in helping new adult students transition successfully in college.

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An Inquiry into the Factors Influencing the Success of the Under Prepared Adult Student

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Abstract

This qualitative study investigated the factors influencing the underprepared adult student's successful attainment of a bachelor's degree and attempted to identify effective educational settings. The research design of a comparative case study approach — 20 interviews with participants from three institutions, analyzing data individually and across cases — resulted in the following findings. The first set of findings was unexpected and involved the students' early lives: 60% of all students (82% of the women) reported experiencing severe abuse as children. Five of the nine abused women indicated experiences of sexual abuse. Students who did not report abuse described homes that provided neither support nor encouragement for self-improvement. Second, the students developed their voices through a series of significant moments which led to transformations in perspective. Third, evidence from the study suggests that the educational setting can influence change. Connected relationships with faculty, students and staff, recognition of past experiences, positive attitudes about students' ability to learn, and teaching pedagogy that encourages interactive dialogue were cited by students as having beneficial impacts.

Introduction

My interest in this area began more than 15 years ago when as the Director of an off-site campus serving adult students, I noted many students whom I advised had either maintained below average high school grades or had dropped out of high school and later earned a GED. These students would often initially question their own ability to succeed in college even though they had found high levels of success professionally. After a few classes, they would express amazement at how well they were doing and wonder if the next few classes would be more difficult for them. As they began to recognize their own abilities, they would seek ways to accelerate the process.

The U.S. Bureau of Census has often correlated higher educational attainment with greater socio-economic success both for individuals and the nation (Day, 1995, p. 1). Yet the 2000 Census Bureau reported that only 25.2% of adults over twenty-five years old have completed a bachelor's degree or higher (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census). In addition, while it has been recognized that underprepared students have been the ones most likely to drop out of school (Astin, 2000), recent reports have indicated the high school-completion rate has slowed over the past 15 years, with almost one-fourth of American students failing to complete high school (Fletcher, 2001). Further, people who have achieved relatively low levels of education account for a disproportionately high number of welfare recipients, prison inmates, poor people, the unemployed, and non-voters (Astin, 2000). These adults also often find themselves caught in a web that all too often is sown by a continued cycle of violence and trauma.

Researchers report that a multiple factors affect the success of adult students (Cross, 1981; Aslanian, 1980; Knowles, 1990; Merriam, 1997). Most studies, however, have focused on the negative characteristics of this population and have, thus, created an image that envisions adult students caught in a cycle of failure. These studies provide an image of the adult student who can never be truly successful in attaining a college degree since his/her knowledge, experiences and abilities do not equal those of the traditional student. However, many adult students do manage to obtain bachelor's degrees every year.

In fact, adult students have long been recognized as a unique population to whom traditional indicators of college success and satisfaction cannot be applied easily (Astin, 1993; Chickering, 1974; Houle, 1984). In 1993, Astin reported on a 1983 longitudinal study of college freshmen that followed the students for four years. The results showed that high school GPA and positive motivation are positively correlated with college GPA. Of these two, Astin stated that high school GPA is the stronger predictor. However, he indicated that the longer the period of time between pretest and posttest measures, the lower the correlation.

This inquiry sought to determine if there were more effective ways to deliver education to better support all adult students, regardless of their academic background. The study focused on providing an understanding of the essential factors that contribute to the underprepared adult student's successful attainment of a bachelor's degree. While most research on adult students has focused on those characteristics that are deterrents to success, studies assessing the ability of the adult student to succeed academically must take into account the multiplicity of influences that interact with the learning environment (Cross, 1981; Schlossberg et al., 1989; Tennant and Pogson, 1995; Chickering, 1974). This inquiry sought to shift away from identifying deterrents toward a perspective that identified the factors leading to success.

Primary Research Question

What factors influence academically underprepared adult students to persist in earning a bachelor's degree?

Sub-questions Guiding This Inquiry:

1. How do significant personal and professional relationships outside the college impact the success of the adult student? Many researchers suggest influence from external factors such as work and family may be more important in terms of nontraditional-age students' integration, which in turn affects variation in commitment (Cleveland-Innes, 1994; Chickering, 1974; Cross, 1981; Aslanian, 1980; Tinto, 1987). A 1995 study by Naretto looked at adult student retention and the influence of both the campus and the external social environment. The researcher compared persisters to non-persisters and reported "persisters indicated support was 57% external and 43% college, while nonpersisters indicated support was 70% external and 30% college" (p. 96). Naretto concluded that *support* is critical and that a majority of persisters expressed a strong sense of support from the college community: "Many reflected on how support from one subcommunity compensated for nonsupport from another" (p. 94). Therefore, relationships both at work and at home were considered.

2. How do personal relationships at the College influence the success of the academically underprepared adult student? The personal relationships explored included but were not limited to the teacher-student, student-student, advisor-

student, or administrator-student relationship. For the adult student, the classroom is often the only frequent connection with the college or university environment. The classroom then becomes the critical experience. Much research calls for teachers who are connected and deeply engaged with their students (Daloz, 1986; Brookfield, 1995; Palmer 1998; Belenky, Clinchy, Godberger, and Tarule, 1995). Mentoring is seen as the means of making this type of connection, since mentors provide support, challenge and vision (Cohen and Galbraith, 1995; Daloz, 1986; Brookfield, 1990; Cohen, 1995).

3. Do "triggering moments" compel the underprepared adult student to return to school and to remain persistent in his/her goals? In addition, do multiple "triggering moments" exist? Throughout, the literature emphasizes "moments" that provide the catalyst to seeking and persisting in education. Many scholars assert that we can more easily understand changes in adult students' development within the context of particular transitions or triggering events, the most common of which involve career or family. Many theorists provide a strong link to the developmental voices of Belenky et al. (1986). They suggest that as adults vary their context, the psycho-cultural assumptions which may have previously constrained them are now integrated within new contexts and nurturing relationships (Jarvis, 1987; Tennant, 1993; Mezirow, 1991). This integration encourages these students to question old assumptions and to then reconstitute new structures through which new experiences provide a new understanding of the world around them. Basseches' (1990) dialectical perspective assumes that individuals develop learning through experiential relationships that change the meaning of concepts, ideas, and facts as these relationships and experiences change. He further assumes that change in personal and social development is fundamental and a result of extending one's cognitive schemata by putting this change into practice in the real world

4. Does the linking of the underprepared adult student's classroom learning to on-going personal and professional experiences affect persistence of the adult student's learning? Kolb's (1984) work on experiential learning, combined with many other researchers such as Knowles, provides a convincing indication that learning accelerates when the student is able to link concepts/theories to actual experiences. This growing literature has begun to recognize an indigenous knowledge gained from experience and the value of linking it to classroom learning (Apps, 1989; Freire, 1993; Cohen, 1997; Merriam and Cafferella, 1991; Jarvis, 1992). Some researchers have found that students who were asked to reflect on their own professional education were able to stage a dialogue between their field and classroom experiences. Students could then build a sense of the competencies they most needed (Schon, 1995; Vista and Dinmore, 1997; Mezirow, 1997; Jarvis, 1992). Learning occurs as a result of the relationship between one's personal stock of knowledge and the socio-cultural milieu in which the experience takes place (Jarvis, 1987). *Dialogue*, then, represented as interaction between teacher and student and between students themselves, creates an environment that encourages reflection and learning (Jarvis, 1992; Basseches, 1990; Freire, 1993; Kegan, 1982).

Methodology

The study examined academically underprepared adult students who either succeeded in attaining a bachelor's degree or who were within their senior year of a bachelor's degree. The students interviewed were between the ages of 25 and 49 years when they attended the four-year institutions from which they graduated. For the purposes of this study, academically underprepared adult students were considered those who had either dropped out of high school or who had consistently maintained a below-average cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of C- or lower throughout their high school experience. My belief was that academically underprepared students *would* appear to have the most to overcome, both academically and psychologically, before success can be attained.

I, thus, sought to understand the experiences of these students as they pursued a bachelor's degree by attempting to consider not only the students themselves and their experiences, but also the context of their varied environments and relationships. As each student was guided to share his/her experiences in the successful attainment of a bachelor's degree, themes and patterns interwoven within the interviews were allowed to emerge. The goal was to interpret and understand the relationships among the various factors that emerged and subsequently how these factors interacted to influence the success of each academically underprepared adult student. Since it was expected that the individual experiences would differ, I employed a multiple case study approach by collecting and analyzing the data individually and then across cases.

The study included 20 students who were interviewed from three four-year institutions. Initially, a letter describing the research was sent to either the President or the Dean of Continuing Education. At each of the institutions, permission was granted to work with either the Dean of Continuing Studies or an advisor to identify students who met the specified criteria. At two of the institutions, a letter developed by the researcher was sent to recent graduates. This letter explained the research and requested that the student call or e-mail the researcher directly if he/she desired to be involved in the research. At the third institution the decision was made by the President to forward the letter describing the research and the criteria for participants to advisors. The advisors then spoke with and sought permission from students whom they felt fit the criteria.

The structure and environment of the three institutions from which students were drawn varied extensively. (The names of the colleges and the locations have been changed to protect the confidentiality of the students and the colleges involved.) Knowles State College was established in 1972 and is a regionally accredited college designed to service adult students. Nine campuses, located throughout the state, enroll over 4,000 adults a year. While the College has a central administrative office located in the capital of the state, there is no main campus or library. With their college ID's, students are allowed to use the libraries of the other public and private colleges within the state. Part-time faculty who come from other state colleges, private business, industry, and the professions teaches all courses. Courses are delivered in a variety of formats: intensive models, online, directed study, evening and day classes.

The second institution, St. Ann's College, has a main campus located in one of the state's largest cities. While the College serves the needs of both traditional and nontraditional age individuals, it offers no off-site campuses. Its leadership is drawn from the sisters of the Presentation of Mary. Established in 1933, the College offers a

Catholic liberal education. Social justice and service to others is a special focus of its work. Adult classes are offered in the evening in a traditional 15-week format.

The third institution, Laurel University, is a multi-site university offering classes both online and on-site in fifteen states across the country. While its main campus is located in one of the state's largest cities, the program in which the students interviewed were enrolled is offered off-site in office buildings or hotels. It is an 18-month cohort-based program for adults who, ordinarily, are expected to have completed a minimum of a year of college or the equivalent in life experience. Classes are offered one evening a week for five weeks. Study groups are an integral and required part of the program. In-class and out-of-class student work relies heavily on study group activities.

A two-hour interview with each participant was coordinated. In most cases, the interviews were held at either the main campus or the off-site campus which the participant attended. Data analysis began with each individual case. The data were gathered and then organized into categories, themes, and patterns. Themes emerging from the interviews were carefully coded, and the context of the interviews was analyzed in relation to predetermined themes. The goal was to understand multiple relationships among the many dimensions that may have emerged and to then identify patterns across the cases (Patton, 1990). Cross-case analysis was ongoing. At the outset, I sought patterns as outlined within, but not limited to, the research questions previously described.

Using the qualitative software, *NVivo*, codes were initially developed from the four primary research questions. As the interviews were transcribed, reviewed and coded, other emerging patterns were noted and added to the node tree within the software. The protocol was then adjusted for upcoming interviews. As the interviews proceeded, I continued the coding process and utilized the software capabilities to determine common themes and to link the individual transcriptions to other transcriptions with similar themes. The use of the software allowed for the development of models and attribute tables.

Findings

As I reflected on the attribute table, a series of characteristics emerged from the data. All students interviewed were born in the United States. Their ethnic backgrounds varied broadly. Those who first entered college in their late teens or early 20's took from 15 to 32 years to attain a bachelor's degree. Those who entered college in their mid-twenties or later took from 4 to 15 years to complete their degree. When queried about the colleges they first entered, 70% reported they first started at community colleges; 10% entered private two-year colleges; only 20% began their college career at a four-year college. More than half (55%) believed they were learning disabled. While only 20% reported that in adulthood they had been diagnosed, another 20% reported that at least one of their children had been diagnosed with a learning disability, and they believed that this might have been a problem for them also. Another 15% also believed they may have had a learning disability. Of the latter two groups, the inability to focus was consistently mentioned. Of the students interviewed, 30% (six) reported that neither of their parents graduated from high school; 50% (ten) reported that both parents had graduated from high school; the remaining 20% (four) reported that at least one parent had some college with only one student reporting that her father had received a doctoral degree.

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While each story was unique, the students fell into two distinct groups: one group was primarily female and spoke of many levels of abuse; the other was primarily male and spoke of environments that did not provide the type of nourishment needed to grow intellectually. This second group of primarily male students represented my first images of what I had begun to call *empty spaces*.

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The first group was made up of 14 students (ten were female and four male; 70% of those interviewed). These 14 students described early frames of reference and perspectives that were very dark. Many saw themselves as hopeless, dumb individuals who would never amount to anything. Within this group of 14 were two men, who for all other purposes in this study, fell within the second group since they never reported being physically abused. However, while they did not speak about severe abuse, they were for some apparent reason unable to perceive themselves as better than their circumstances or educational attainment defined. This self image, which was common to the first group, led me to believe that for these two men, abuse may have been part of their background. All of these 14 students entered their early years of adulthood with damaged self-esteem.

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Twelve students (60% of all those interviewed; 9 females and 3 males) reported high levels of psychological, physical and sexual abuse. Five of the nine abused women indicated they had been sexually abused. Of this group of 12 students, 10 sought extensive counseling in the years prior to returning to school and finishing their bachelor's degree. The remaining two reported having only met with a counselor a few times. Sixty percent of all students interviewed had extensive counseling (one year or more) before returning to school; another thirty percent reported some counseling (less than one year). Of this group with abusive backgrounds, the vast majority (10 of the 12) also reported that alcoholism affected either them or members of their immediate family. Of those not reporting severe abuse, only one spoke about alcohol as a factor in her environment. The remaining seven did not mention it as a factor.

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The perspectives of a smaller percentage of the students interviewed, 30% (six — five male and one female) were not so dark; sometime during their lives they had been able to perceive themselves as better than their circumstances or their educational attainment had defined. The primary characteristic that distinguishes these six students from the majority is that none mentioned being severely abused. Most often the student, then child, was told that he/she would never amount to anything. Some reported that their parents merely did not know any better, or that their environment defined, as one said, their *lot in life*. For these students, their immediate culture defined their future, and they could not see beyond the confines of their own parochial existence. Often, differences in learning styles or actual learning disabilities were overlooked by both the parent and the public school system.

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A common theme throughout this study was that of transformation. As children, the majority of these students had negative and/or severely damaged self-perceptions. While they had accepted their *lot in life*, they described a series of events and relationships that gradually changed their self-perceptions and understanding of the world around them. They began their journey identified only by their limitations. Their initial attempts at beginning a journey, however, were often strewn with many difficulties. A striking one-third of the interviewees (six women, one man) admitted either having actually attempted suicide or contemplated suicide. Through the development of supportive circles of relationships, their self-perceptions were transformed, and they saw themselves as capable individuals.

What appeared essential is that the types of supportive communities found external to the college community continued within the colleges. The internal college relationships most often discussed as being important were those of teacher-student, and student-student. In addition, the advisor-student relationship surfaced as a significant contributing factor to the success or persistence of these students. Often, it was the advisor relationship that served as the initial catalyst that encouraged the student to begin this educational journey.

When I analyzed the data by institution and compared and contrasted all the individual interviews, the data indicated three varied patterns. In addition, I found varying levels of development between the students. Those who attended Laurel University or Knowles State displayed a higher level of development than most who attended St. Ann's. All of these students spoke of the tremendous change they had undergone personally.

At Knowles State, students spoke about advisors who first gave them the requisite respect and encouragement. Further, they most spoke about teachers who were enthusiastic, committed, supportive, and who appeared connected to their needs. These Knowles students did speak about the importance of interaction in the classroom and a dialogue of learning consisting of a sharing of the various perspectives and experiences with other students. However, these students often lamented the inability to develop deep bonds with other students since each class would bring a whole new group of students together.

At Laurel, this pattern was reversed. Initially, an advisor provided the requisite support and caring. However, the mere distance from the main campus prevented/inhibited any connection or opportunity to interact with advisors or staff. In addition, due to the nature of their five-week terms, these students found it difficult to establish deep relationships with their teachers. Instead, Laurel students spoke at length about the deep emotion and bond developed with their fellow classmates. They expressed intense feeling and emotion for their classmates and spoke of a sense of community, caring, connection and commitment that often extended both far beyond the classroom and the end of their degrees. For the few who spoke about the cohort experience, these groups appeared to function much as a family or a community.

And, finally, at St. Ann's, a very different pattern emerged. Students at St. Ann's found the requisite high level of respect and safety. However, the environment seemed to also prevent the essential interaction that students from the other colleges found essential. Students often spoke of not knowing who their advisor was or of having limited accessibility to advisors and other staff members. Offices were often not open after 4 p.m. when students arrived. Many students spoke of teachers who lectured thus limiting the dialogue in the classroom. Students from each of the schools spoke about the importance of allowing them to integrate their past experience into the classroom. In addition, they all emphasized how they learned from hearing other adult students share experiences. At. St. Ann's these moments of sharing were reported as being limited.

Discussion

In discussing changes in adult students' development, Aslanian (1980) asserts that a major and/or traumatic event often motivates adults to return to school. While we frequently see such triggering moments in the lives of the students interviewed for this research, their actual stories revealed a much more complex picture of triggering moments. Rather than one event, these stories disclose a series of critical incidents, all of which were intricately linked to important relationships. These incidents combined with the support of these evolving significant relationships and led to moments of deep reflection.

The vast majority of these students told stories that illuminated the power of personal and professional relationships in helping them lift the veil of low self-esteem and return to school. While the students never forgot their past, these new relationships offered different experiences and interactions. Most often the students spoke either of leaving the early places in which they had felt low self-esteem and experiencing successes at work. It was in these professional environments that many developed relationships with co-workers who acknowledged their skills and abilities. For others, their first significant new relationships were primarily social.

The interactions and opportunities for dialogue, provided in both social and professional relationships, offered the encouragement and nourishment necessary for them to grow intellectually and emotionally. I discovered most of the interviewees had a variety of work and home relationships and experiences prior to the point at which they considered themselves capable of returning to school. As the interactions progressed, each student began to see and experience the world in a different way and subsequently recognized his/her ability to engage and affect others.

These new relationships also provided new models of behavior. In some cases, mentors offered a new frame of reference that was in direct contrast to the students' original frames of reference. Within their journey, these students continued to make important choices and eventually developed new communities made up of new friends or co-workers. From these communities, they began to develop a different self-perception, one that recognized they were capable, even bright individuals. It was then that they began not only to value education, but also to see it as a realistic possibility for themselves.

As I began to analyze the data, several themes arose through my coding system: caring, connection, commitment, and community. Looming over these themes were two others: challenge and respect. Students were willing to take on challenge and to change but they needed to feel respected by those relationships around them. These themes appeared to be significant factors in contributing to the ability of the underprepared student to be successful. In addition, especially for those describing abuse, the data indicated that these students needed to feel safe.

As I listened to the retrospective reflection of these students, I began to note patterns of development that suggested the developmental stages described by Belenky et al. (1986). Most started with *Silenced Voices* and through triggering events and supportive, external relationships appeared to move into the *Received Knowledge* stage (a perspective from which they began to perceive themselves as capable of receiving knowledge) described by Belenky et al. Some started with this second stage.

In addition, the data also suggests that they had progressed through a series of perspective transformations as suggested by Mezirow (1991).

> Transformative learning involves an enhanced level of awareness of the context of one's beliefs and feelings, a critique of their assumptions and particularly premises, an assessment of alternative perspectives, a decision to negate an old perspective in favor of a new one…Perspective transformation involves (a) an empowered sense of

> self, (b) more critical understanding of how one's social relationships and culture have shaped one's beliefs and feelings, and (c) more functional strategies and resources for taking action (Mezirow, 1991, p. 161).

These shifts led toward transformation for most, but certainly change and growth for all. Students, who once contemplated suicide, now recognized their own place in the world and their ability to contribute to its knowledge by engaging in interactive discourse. No longer did they need to rely solely on the perspective of others. They gradually became aware that their former beliefs and feelings about their former selves were the direct results of their former frames of reference. Many of these former frames reflected not just *empty spaces* but rather *abusive spaces*. Gradually, each student became keenly aware that his/her old assumptions had been based on these old perspectives, and, each made decisions to change. The findings of this study do indicate that relationships are important but, since I was seeing a distinct difference between the students from St. Ann's and those from the other two schools, I had to question the differences in these relationships. What emerged from the data were relationships that emphasized interaction through a dialogue of learning. Several researchers spoke about this type of interaction and movement through change (Kegan, 1982; Basseches, 1990; Mezirow, 1991; Belenky et. al., 1986). The data did indicate that this interactive dialogue of learning was important. However, it needed to be both respectful and challenging – challenging the student to reconsider his/her perspectives and to then change.

At St. Ann's, the relationships seemed to stop at "respect". It was as if this veil of respect prevented a dialogue that would challenge perspectives. St. Ann's students learned new skills and felt better about themselves. However, all except one still doubted how much they had changed. Only one, who had chosen to attend full-time, paralleled the developmental growth of students from the other colleges and spoke at length about interactions with other students.

When I stepped back and considered the significant personal relationships the students spoke of, what emerged was that those personal relationships that did not encourage and support change were the ones most often left behind. As these old relationships were left, a resilience was gradually developed, one that allowed learning through a questioning of old perspectives and gaining of new experiences. As they entered these college communities, they were encouraged to link external experiences to their classroom experiences through constant interaction and the creation of a dialogue of learning.

Conclusion

The three environments included in this study were quite different. Knowles State served only adult students. And, from its students we hear about the importance of caring, connected advisors and teachers who support and engage the student. In addition, Knowles State, as well as Laurel University, emphasized the value of reflection and past experiences by encouraging the use of life experience portfolios, as well as the utilization of various tests to build the students' college-level credits. At Laurel, the cohort classrooms served to create safe, supportive communities in which the students were encouraged to share experiences. These communities functioned much as nurturing families.

While eight of the students from St. Ann's College did succeed in completing their degree, these students are most notable for the lack of a significant shift in their self-perceptions. It is as if they gained professionally from classroom learning but were unable to connect that learning to some deeper meaning within themselves. The perceived difference between this environment and that of the other two colleges was the restricted level of interactive dialogue with advisors, teachers and other students.

A complex interactive process had occurred and a metamorphosis of self had emerged. Students, who once had described their early classroom experiences as those in which they had no voice, had found their voices. They had lacked that bridge created by supportive relationships with whom they could engage in dialogue. Their journeys were complex paths that wound across themselves and doubled back. It was as though the students were in a maze trying to find a way out.

As Belenky et al. (1986) pointed out, learning could occur in a variety of places outside of the classroom. Through an integration of experience and learning, an acceleration of learning occurred. The accelerated learning came, not simply from the exploring of varied disciplines, but rather from having had experiences upon which to reflect and link to the theories and concepts presented in class. Further, when the students compared themselves to their own former selves, they seemed to be acknowledging what Mezirow (1991) suggested: their psycho-cultural assumptions had been challenged by their new experiences and integrated with their old in such a way as to change their perspectives.

The majority of these stories are of transformations, transformations that occurred through a process. As suggested by Mezirow (1991), many of these students have gone beyond seeing the world and accepting the reality which had originally been presented to them. They now recognize their ability to take part in the construction of knowledge. They better understand their place in the world and their contributions to society and the workplace.

The major theme of these stories is the power of relationships. It is not simply the connections felt, but rather the creation of nurturing and supportive communities that generate opportunities for interaction and a dialogue of learning that challenges the student to change. At each juncture, an opportunity exists to respect the place from which each has come, by "sharing, encouraging, asking good questions and drawing out each other's thoughts, looking for the person's strengths, and building on each other's insights" (Belenky et al., 1997, p. 61).

The beginning of a path toward success developed from within a cycle of failure. As the students moved beyond their early *empty spaces,* they made choices about relationships and professional experiences. These initial choices, external to the college, provided them with their first successes and created their first *safe spaces.* As they learned new skills in the professional arenas, they began to see themselves as successful. Personal and professional relationships reinforced the growing sense of self-esteem. Each recognized a need to grow and to further develop. Further, each found a new motivation, the overcoming of previous educational failures or his/her "lot in life".

These students were still vulnerable when they entered college. Most found nurturing and supportive relationships within the institution. The most significant relationships were part of the classroom experience. It was there that the teacher established a safe but challenging environment that respected the student, engaged him/her in dialogue and allowed each to use his/her *voice.* The ensuing interaction and dialogue encouraged students to share perspectives by drawing on their varied experiences and linking their new learning to their past and current experiences. Throughout this path to success, two themes served as the umbrella: respect and commitment to change. While their development began through early life experience, their final transformation did not occur until they entered the academic environment. Only then were their self-perceptions changed enough for them to truly believe in their potential, to continue their growth, to become resilient, and to be ultimately transformed.

Implications

Leaders of American higher education must take it upon themselves to find ways to unlock the hidden talents of those who at first have no mouth, thus no voice, those who at first appear to be the *underprepared* but may very well actually be the *underrespected*. This study represents a small sample of individuals, the findings, however, do suggest that as adult educators, we should further explore the need to design communities which encourage the necessary supportive relationships exemplified within these stories. The findings of this study suggest that educational setting can influence change by providing opportunities to develop relationships with faculty, other students and staff. These communities should recognize the value of past experiences and provide a positive attitude toward the student's ability to learn. An emphasis should be placed on helping faculty create classroom environments that can be seen as safe and that encourage an interactive dialogue. When I compared the three environments from which these students emerged, it was those environments that set up opportunities for the adult student to interact and engage in a dialogue with internal constituents of the college community that produced individuals who were most empowered and able to use their voice. The creation of internal communities to support the non-traditional student should be the subject of future research

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Spinal Adjustment: Using Feedback from Students and Faculty to Ensure Consistency and Continuity in Spine Courses of a Liberal and Professional Studies (LPS) Adult Major

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Introduction

Many colleges and universities offer capstone experiences for graduating seniors that ideally represent two dimensions of seamless or continuous learning: between the capstone course and previous learning within the institution (Palomba & Banta, 1999) and between in-class and out-of-class experience (Kuh, 1997). This continuity is especially important for working adult learners enrolled in individualized degree programs such as Capital University s Liberal and Professional Studies (LPS), where curricular continuity comes from vertically integrated spine courses leading to a Senior Thesis, and out-of-class experience includes prior classroom and experiential learning as well as problems and opportunities in the workplace.

Capital University is a private, liberal arts university in Ohio, affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Churches of America. First established in 1830 as a Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio, Capital was chartered as a university in 1850 and presently has about 6,000 students. Capital offers graduate programs in law, management, music and nursing (*Undergraduate Bulletin*, 2001).

Since 1979 Capital has offered alternative degree programs for working adults, first as the University Without Walls, later through the Adult Degree Program, and more recently in the Centers for Lifelong Learning (CLLs) in Columbus, Cleveland and Dayton (Hartmann, Ferrante & Belcastro, 1999). Although Capital□s CLLs offer catalog majors, a popular option has been the LPS major, which incorporates students' experiential learning, career requirements and aspirations into personalized degree plans. The spine of this major is an integrated sequence of required courses: LPS 199 (degree planning and basic research skills); LPS 399 (advanced research methods); LPS 499 (senior thesis). An elective course in the spine is LPS 299, which teaches how to create portfolios to obtain credit for experiential learning.

In the interests of improving the quality, consistency and continuity of the LPS spine, a preliminary self-study was done by Norris in the spring semester of 2002. Particular issues that seemed to need attention were the proper balance of degree planning and research in 199, whether 299 should be required or continued as an elective, and ensuring that 399 students would not have to reinvent the wheel in turning their research projects into senior theses in 499. A problem throughout the spine series has been differing abilities and progress among students.

An LPS Curriculum Committee (Leathwood & Phillips, 2000) was created at a statewide CLL meeting on February 15, 2002, to provide a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas among faculty from the Cleveland, Columbus and Dayton Centers who teach LPS 199, 299, 399 and 499 courses. The committee s goal is to facilitate the delivery of these courses, with particular attention to face validity of published course descriptions (standardization) and a smooth course sequence (continuity). A long-term goal is establishing a Master of Liberal Studies program.

Norris collected and analyzed course syllabi as a first step toward curriculum assessment (Eberly, Newton & Wiggins, 2001). We felt it important to consult LPS majors as well as each other, so Norris created a two page semi-structured discussion instrument (Appendix A) which was administered during the final weeks of Spring, 2002, LPS classes. Professors who led these discussions with students exemplified Michael Quinn Patton s characterization of qualitative research: The researcher is the instrument (1990: 14). The instrument and explanation for administration was sent to all current LPS faculty on March 1, 2002, results were compiled and analyzed, and a preliminary report was given at a statewide LPS meeting on May 18, 2002.

In addition, Richter-Hauk administered a quantitative survey of student attitudes toward the Blackboard Learning System (2002) in two sections of LPS 199 during the summer of 2002, and also did qualitative analysis of students' Blackboard postings about the LPS program in general. As we discuss results below, we emphasize 199 because it generated more data and is undeniably important as prerequisite for other spine courses and gateway to the LPS degree.

LPS 199 - Methods for Liberal Inquiry

The current catalog description of LPS 199 is as follows:

> *An introduction to research methods underlying scholarship in liberal and professional studies; assessment of academic skills and learning styles; identification of learning outcomes from life experience; development of a degree plan.*

Syllabi were analyzed for Professors Still (Cleveland), McDonald (Columbus) and Richter-Hauk (Dayton). All three used Booth, Colomb & Williams (1995) and Lester (1999) as principal texts, facilitated degree plans and scholarly investigation of research questions, required documented consultations with advisors, and called for student presentations: this shows a considerable degree of consistency (standardization) across the Cleveland, Columbus and Dayton CLLs. Teaching techniques that not all syllabi had in common were: promoting problem-based research; documented consultation with research librarians; keeping a journal about the research process; maintaining learning portfolios; time capsule letters to stimulate lifelong learning.

In the semi-structured discussions conducted among students and faculty in the Spring, 2002, semester, LPS 199 students understood it was a key course in the sequence but tended to feel that expectations may be too high for students returning to higher education, especially if the course were to include portfolio construction. (At that time, instruction in assembling portfolios to obtain credit for experiential learning was being considered for inclusion in 199). As mentioned earlier, both faculty and students perceived problems because of varying student abilities. For example, although all had taken equivalent English prerequisites, some had done an APA paper and some hadn't. Although students appreciated the standardized, boiler plate Excel software for creating degree plans, some indicated that they would prefer a more user-friendly version of the software.

Also discussed in spring classes was the combination of degree planning and scholarly research in 199: this connection seemed logical to some, illogical to others. Some felt that degree planning should be a one hour course; others felt that degree planning should remain throughout the sequence, because concentrations and majors sometimes change as students go through both the LPS spine courses and other degree requirements. Some felt that the degree planning component of 199 tended to push the research component aside.

Because 199 is the base of the spine in terms of the 199-399-499 course sequence, students' expectations and experience regarding 199 can determine whether they remain in the LPS program or opt for a straight catalog major such as psychology or management. At the present time some adult students - especially if they have been out of the classroom for awhile - may feel overwhelmed by the combination of scholarly research and degree planning that is required in 199.

Richter-Hauk conducted a survey about the Blackboard component of her two sections of 199 during summer of 2002. She was primarily interested in assessing Blackboard□s ability to enhance the course in two ways: maximizing dialogue between class meetings to deepen the educational approach (Kember, et al., 1997); providing a convenient way for students to access the course syllabus, examples of how assignments should be done, and the blank grid for degree planning. She also analyzed student concerns about LPS 199 and the LPS program that accrued as Blackboard postings.

In a quantitative survey, students were asked to rank the helpfulness of Blackboard in the LPS 199 learning experience, the usefulness of its specific components, and the adequacy of Blackboard training on seven-point Likert scales. Because of small sample size (N = 12), the reader is cautioned about the generalization of our findings: no significance tests were performed but means are presented to indicate possible trends. The mean ranking for Blackboard training (6.1) exceeded the mean for Blackboard s helpfulness in learning (5.4). The results of the survey on specific Blackboard features are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Perceived Usefulness of Blackboard Components in LPS 199
(1 = not helpful; 7 = very helpful)

Component	**Mean** (N = 12)
Forum for general discussion	5.4
Sample assignments	6.1
Course syllabus	6.1
Links to external web sites	5.7
Peer feedback on students research questions	5.3
Discussion of Liberal Learning	5.3
Blank grid for degree planning	6.8
Interaction with other 199 section	5.2

The students reacted positively to all the Blackboard features: i.e., no features were rated below five on the seven-point scale. As shown in Table 1, the most popular feature was the blank grid or boiler plate in Excel for designing an LPS degree plan. Previously this program had only been available in the Dayton CLL computer lab. Being able to find the course syllabus and sample assignments was also considered especially useful; however, the more interactive features of Blackboard - general discussion, LPS discussion, peer feedback and interaction with the other 199 section - were perceived as relatively less useful than the features which required only individual access. These findings suggest that the social aspects of Blackboard were less important to students than its utility features.

Overall, qualitative analysis of Blackboard postings about Liberal Learning showed positive student attitudes. However, there were some misgivings about the extra work involved over that required for a catalog degree. Some examples:

> I can't honestly say that I am excited about having an LPS degree. If you have to explain the degree to a potential employer, chances are that you aren□t going to make it to the first interview.
>
> When I discuss my degree plans with others, they sometimes make comments which cause me to feel the need to justify the worth of this commitment of time, money, etc. I am still working this out in my head, but each time I engage in conversation on this topic I find I am better able to articulate its worth. (And perhaps come closer to convincing myself?)
>
> There is much more time and effort required for LPS 199 than I had expected. Sometimes education is a humbling experience.
>
> Overall, however, the Blackboard postings of Richter-Hauk s summer 199 classes showed many positive comments about liberal learning:
>
> I can see now that it is a degree for people who really know what they want to focus on. I feel that being able to have a liberal arts degree will have a bigger impact on my career path than just having a standard Computer Science degree, which anyone can do.
>
> I wanted a degree that focused on what I actually do. I appreciate being part of a program that seeks to make the students well-rounded.
>
> I am an undecided major. I hope that I will gain the needed information to decide on a field of study.
>
> As far as having a liberal education, it looks like this program will allow me to focus on the courses that are most important to my growth and career plans. I think that type of education creates a much more valuable employee and well-rounded person than one whose education is solely in their expertise.
>
> After teaching the two sections of 199 and interacting with the students - both in the classroom and via Blackboard - Richter-Hauk expressed her subjectivity as follows:
>
> Most of the students appear to appreciate the experience of liberal education. They like being able to create their own major, which allows them to focus on their areas of interest.

> Some were skeptical at first, and concerned about the general nature of the LPS major, which seemed to imply that "you didn't know what you wanted". But they ultimately recognized the value of a combination of experience and education that the program allows.
>
> Some students dropped out of the courses and one actually went to her advisor and changed to a catalog major, citing dissatisfaction with LPS 199. However, enrollments were unusually high for the summer, which in fact had caused the creation of the second section. Richter-Hauk discussed her feelings about course attrition in this way:
>
> My personal observation based on verbal feedback solicited is that survivors of the course didnt think expectations were too high. They agreed that the course was challenging but felt a sense of confidence in their ability and pride in their accomplishments (particularly the research project). They also expressed appreciation for a degree plan to guide their future registration for courses.

LPS 299 - Prior Learning Portfolio Development

This course is prefaced in the catalog by the statement, Additionally, the following elective is available to students who are planning to request experiential learning credit. It is then described as follows:

> *Review of the essential components of the prior learning portfolio (identification of experiential learning, content outlines, competency statements and documentation). Includes skills necessary to identify, describe, and document college-level learning acquired outside of the traditional college classroom. Prerequisite: LPS 199.*

Discussion of 299 in spring of 2002 was limited because relatively few LPS students take it. Because it is the only spine course that is not required, this is a point of contention between faculty and students. Professors tend to think that the course should be required, especially if students want to portfolio multiple courses; students state pragmatically that they are not likely to take courses that are not required. By advertising free credit for experiential learning up to 30 credit hours (and only $10.00 per hour thereafter), intensive relationships between students and their faculty advisors to ensure that unnecessary courses are not taken, and LPS 199 with its degree planning grid, Capital perhaps encourages this pragmatism.

Only one faculty member reported a teaching innovation for LPS 299: Professor Olsen (Dayton) reported using peer review several times to hone competency statements (See Writing in Groups, Booth et al., 1995: 31-34). As mentioned earlier, it has been suggested that we take the research component out of 199 and replace it with portfolio training as was done under the predecessor of LPS, ADP (Adult Degree Program) 109.

Some students feel it *would* be helpful to introduce portfolio basics in 199, others feel 199 is already overwhelming. Opinions on a mandatory 299 vary from requiring it for *any* portfolios, to requirement for a certain number (e.g., two or more), to not requiring it at all. Students feel that 299 and the portfolio process should be explained better up front, and some feel that portfolio evaluation is too slow, especially if the content area of experiential learning is beyond the expertise of Capital Faculty and requires an outside evaluator.

LPS 399 - Interdisciplinary Research Seminar

The catalog description of this course is as follows:

> *A research seminar that involves learners in the methods and practices of scholarly inquiry, including critical reading and writing, and research methodology and design; students refine their degree plans, document their learning outcomes and propose an undergraduate thesis. Prerequisite: LPS 199.*

Syllabi were analyzed for McDonald (Columbus) and Norris (Dayton). Both continued to use Booth et al. (1995) as either a primary or secondary text, aimed to produce a polished, documented research paper, and featured student presentations. An implicit notion held by LPS administration and faculty is that 399 students will write a polished, APA paper with a *research question* (practical problem to be solved or area where experts disagree) sufficiently narrow for scholarly inquiry. Also implicit is that this research question will form the basis for a Senior Thesis (LPS 499) in which students will either collect and analyze their own data, or write a more in-depth research paper based on their 399 paper.

Ideas from syllabi which could be applied to all 399 courses include: continued refinement of degree plans; familiarity with Capital’s Research Review Committee, especially for the data collection option; critique of a scholarly article; specific designation of the 399 paper as a basis for the 499 Senior Thesis; provision of one relevant, scholarly article to each student in the beginning; professors’ presentations of their own research to students.

In semi-structured discussions, some 399 students perceived too much overlap between 199 and 399, others felt the sequence was helpful. Students would like for faculty to better explain the spine sequence, but feel instructors may be in the dark as well. Some students feel that three LPS courses are too many and likely to drive students toward catalog majors.

Most students perceived the value of 399, although some expressed concerns about course clarity and continuity with 499. One 499 student wrote, “Thank God for 399!” For two 499 students who hadn’t taken 399 because it wasn’t required prior to the 2001 catalog, one found 499 arduous but the other said, “A senior should be able to handle it.” Students would like to have the same instructor for both but realize the scheduling problems. Some felt that 199 and 399 should be combined. There was broad agreement that a 499 proposal should be an end product of 399. Students praised 399 for exposing them to research basics and scholarly sources.

LPS 499 - Undergraduate Thesis

This course’s catalog description is as follows:

> *The undergraduate thesis is a capstone learning experience that provides the student the opportunity to design and conduct original scholarship incorporating new and prior learning, and encompassing the scholarship of discovery, teaching, integration or application. Students will implement their thesis proposal and analyze, synthesize and fully document research material. Prerequisite: LPS 399.*

A goal recognized implicitly by LPS administration and faculty was that an end product of 399 would be the thesis proposal for 499. The four types of scholarship mentioned above are of course derived from Ernest Boyer (1987) and are usually discussed regarding how the alternative forms of teaching, integration and application apply to faculty, not students. However, it is easy to imagine how Boyer□s ideas would apply to senior theses related to students' work environments through issues of training and problem solving.

We analyzed syllabi for Professors Melbourne (Cleveland), Sagaria (Columbus) and Drewry (Dayton). Only Drewry had required texts: the ubiquitous Booth et al. (1995) and Lester (1999). Our subjectivity was that these syllabi had less in common than those of other LPS courses, but that in itself is not necessarily problematic. Rather, it may reflect a higher level of abstraction in 499. All three professors stressed a capstone experience, student presentations and mandatory meetings with (and input from) faculty consultants/content advisors. Interesting ideas which not all syllabi had in common: broader definitions of senior theses to include creative or artistic projects, and samples of successful 499 topics to inspire students.

Currently, with senior theses for which there is no qualified Capital content advisor, it seems there is both internal resistance (turf and credential issues) as well as external resistance (busy professionals) to outside content advisors and this tends to make the student s 399 professor the default consultant/content advisor because of prior knowledge of the student s work. Assuming the 399 professor already has relevant content advisees, this could cause significant overload.

In semi-structured discussions about 499, students as well as faculty again recognized the serious problems caused by varying abilities and competencies among 499 students. Noticed by both groups in 199, these disparities were perceived as likely to grow due to the vertical nature of the spine courses. At the Dayton CLL we talk about the LPS sequence being subverted by "C student syndrome:" if someone persists in C work throughout, then how do we ensure a coherent degree plan, valid research question and robust thesis? It is useful to make an analogy between the LPS spine and graduate school: in both cases content delivery occurs in a seminar format and a grade of C is not really acceptable (i.e., not likely to lead to a defensible thesis). This serious problem merits serious attention: should deficient LPS students be referred for remedial help or "tracked□ into catalog majors?

There was little student consensus on data collection and analysis as a possible requirement in 499: some felt it a good idea, especially as leading to an M.A. thesis; others felt students should learn the different research methods and be encouraged but not required to collect their own data. There was considerable agreement that LPS courses should build on each other and lead to an M.A. for interested students.

Conclusion

It is clear that the present iteration of the LPS spine represents a change from what went on in the past (Hartmann et al., 1999). There is presently less emphasis on summative assessment of specific mathematics, composition and computing skills. An introductory research course, ADP 109, was once required of all undergraduates but now has been subsumed under LPS 199 and is no longer required of catalog majors. As noted previously, LPS 399 only became a required course in 2001.

Although there is considerable consistency among LPS syllabi already, it is likely that master syllabi will be in place by Spring, 2003. This is being driven by ongoing dialogue with the North Central Association, Capital s accrediting body. In this way the formative process of assessment is integrated into the summative process of program review (Smith & Eder, 2001; Palomba & Banta, 2001). As mentioned earlier in the discussion of continuity between 399 and 499, several assumptions are presently implied by LPS policy but are nowhere explicit in course descriptions or syllabi. Eberly et al.(2001) note that faculty should receive more guidance in developing syllabi.

It has been our experience talking to LPS students that as working adults they don□t expect a perfect world, but are impressed by our efforts toward standardization and continuity in the spine course sequence. Students are particularly grateful that they are being consulted and that we as LPS faculty are communicating. Students recognize that employers are increasingly interested in research skills, and in exit interviews that Norris helped conduct, graduates admitted initial anxiety about the LPS courses and the Senior Thesis, but were surprised and proud of what they were able to accomplish. We believe the LPS Curriculum Committee can fine tune the 199-299-399-499 course sequence and develop a Master of Liberal Studies program as well.

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Appendix A - Semi-structured LPS Discussion Guide

LPS Professor ___________________
LPS Course _______________ Number of Students Participating _______

We as LPS faculty are very interested in a 199-299-399 sequence that fulfills the catalog course descriptions and is a continuous learning process. What do you as students think of the current course descriptions, sequence and delivery?

Is the current combination of degree planning and scholarly research in 199 helpful?

Is 299 merely window dressing because it is not required? If few students plan to take it, would it be helpful to introduce portfolio basics in 199? Should 299 be *required* for portfolio hours beyond a certain minimum?

Is 399 specific enough, especially in learning different research methods? What are student expectations for this course?

Is there a problem with students entering 499 with significantly different degrees of preparation? Should *all* students be required to collect and analyze data (e.g., using surveys, participant observation, case studies, secondary analysis, archives, etc.) for their Senior Thesis? Would assured continuity from LPS 199-399-499 into a Master s program give more students the inspiration and confidence to pursue an M.A. degree?

What do students think of the possibility of splitting the LPS degree into two tracks: Liberal Studies and Professional Studies?

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